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Three Rivers Fellowship

The Pauline Bootcamp (Session One)

The Identification, Definition, and Necessity of Paul's Gospel

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1. Purpose of this Session

The purpose of this session is threefold:

1. To identify Paul's gospel in the pages of the New Testament
2. To briefly define Paul's Gospel
3. To show the necessity of Paul's distinctive Gospel

The original Bootcamp Series had at least one flaw. It did not provide a *brief* definition of "Paul's Gospel". This lack of a brief definition may have left an audience not already familiar with Paul's Gospel in a position of difficulty for a complete understanding (kind of like taking Calculus before Algebra). In the authors' defense, however, they assumed the original audience already knew the meaning of Paul's Gospel and had at least a slight understanding of it prior to the Bootcamp Series. This session identifies Paul's Gospel in the hope of providing a brief understanding to appreciate its implications more fully. Finally, I hope this outline shows the *necessity* of Paul's distinctive gospel, as the gospel to be preached, taught, and obeyed for salvation today.

2. Identifying Paul's Gospel

In this section we use the word *identify* to show that Paul's Gospel was a distinct revelation by the Savior Himself to Paul is actually called out in Scripture. Sadly, most professing students of Scripture read "right over" these occurrences and miss the importance and distinctiveness of the gospel given to Paul by the post-ascended Christ. If students of Scripture had been just a bit more discriminating in their reading and exegesis, they would have captured this long ago. The idea of not recognizing critical terms seems to plague everyone. In this sense, we do not have to define Paul's Gospel ahead of time, then go looking for it in the pages of the New Testament; rather it ought to "pop out" of the pages without explicitly looking for it.

How often have you been in conversations with saints who understand Paul's Gospel say,

"When I finally realized the distinctiveness of Paul's Gospel, I wondered how I could have missed it all these years?"

Before we examine the Scriptures *defining* Paul's Gospel, let's first locate the term "Paul's Gospel" (rather its possessive equivalent) and in so doing *identify* Paul's Gospel in the pages of the inspired text. This should set a flag in the mind of every regenerated student of Scripture that something different comes with the Apostle Paul since he received a "new gospel" by the Savior Himself. Curious questions should arise in the mind of regenerated students of Scripture wanting to know "what could be different from that of the Kingdom Gospel preached before?" Below are various references to Paul's Gospel, preceded by brief underlined comments.

1. Paul's Gospel is the Standard by which the world is assessed.

Rom 2:16 *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

2. Paul's Gospel is the means for maturing in Christ (Establishment) and defined to be the Mystery (see Eph 5:25-32, 33)

Rom 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish 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.*

3. Paul's Gospel is identified to be an entire Dispensation and "faithed" to Paul when regenerated (Acts 9)

1 Cor 9:17 *For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of*

the gospel is committed unto me.

4. Paul's Gospel is identified as the "gospel of the Glory" that was "faithed" to him at his regeneration (Acts 9)

1 Tim 1:11 *According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*¹

5. The resurrection of Christ was according to Paul's Gospel

2 Tim 2:8 *Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.*

In these verses, we see Paul claiming ownership of a gospel that was given to him by the Lord Himself long after the His ascension. Possibly some seven years after His ascension, Christ called to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), when the Spirit of God regenerated Paul and gave him a specific faith that included a *new* gospel, indeed a *new* dispensation. Furthermore, this gospel being "faithed" to Paul, means that Paul received *his* gospel (Good News) at his regeneration and possessed it right from the beginning of his ministry (Acts 9).

How many of us have missed these important references in the past? They teach that there exists a gospel given to Paul long after the Savior's ascension, indeed long after Pentecost in Acts 2. Is there a pulpit today correlating these passages and teaching their clear meaning?

What is this gospel? How does it differ from the Kingdom gospel preached by the Savior Himself, Peter, James, John, et al?

3. **Defining Paul's Gospel?**

We see from the New Testament that Paul was given a gospel which he labeled as "his gospel", a gospel which he claimed ownership. What is this gospel? Let's see how Paul himself defines his gospel.

Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
 2 If (Since) ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (Chapter 2:11-22)
 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge (epignosis) in the mystery of Christ)
 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets² by the Spirit;
 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable (no prior trace) riches of Christ;
 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship (dispensation) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

¹ As an important aside, notice Paul states that his gospel was "faithed" to him in both the Corinthian epistle (an early epistle) and 1 Timothy (a later epistle). This fact has significant and staggering contradictory ramifications for the Acts 2 & 28 positions. The gospel that Paul was given, literally "faithed to him" was from the very beginning of his ministry in Acts 9. Up until the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, the Kingdom gospel was preached alone.

² A Figure of Hendiadys better translated "prophetic apostles".

There are several new ideas which Paul describes for his audience in these verses. Some of these are briefly enumerated below.

1. Paul explicitly states (vs. 6) that his gospel contains the doctrine that Gentiles and Jews are *equal* within the Body of Christ. There is no ethnic distinction or authoritative hierarchy among them (see also Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). The idea of the “lack of ethnic and authoritative distinction” is unheard of in the Old Testament and non-Pauline New testament. Ethnic distinction is a key element within the earthly Kingdom Gospel. See the following references for examples of ethnic and authoritative distinction within the Earthly Kingdom Program: Isa 19:1-25; 60:1-3; Amos 9:9-15 (esp. vs 12); Zech 8:20-23; Mat 15:22-28; Acts 8:27-39; 1 Pet 1:1, 2; James 1:1. Now compare these passages with Paul discussion in Eph 2:11-22. A major difference exists between the audience of the Kingdom Gospel (Israel + Nations) and the Body of Christ (Nationless). The Kingdom program comprises Many Ethnic Bodies (Jews, Ethiopians, Syrians, Chinese, Danes, Celts, etc.), but, the Body of Christ is defined as one and only One Body (Eph 4:4) which is completely non-ethnic (neither Jew nor Gentile [Gal 3:28]).
2. Paul defines his gospel as the specific gospel of which he is made a minister. Paul explicitly states (vss. 6-9) that “he is made a minister” of this gospel and in this context describes himself as the least of all saints. He goes on to state that his gospel represents the *unsearchable* riches of Christ, meaning that no one will find Paul’s Gospel anywhere else in Scripture – only in Paul! There is no trace, no broken stick, no bent blade of grass, nor spot of blood that would betray his gospel before he received from the Lord Himself. It was literally, shut-up in the mind of God, until the Damascus Road (Acts 9).
3. Paul further defines his gospel to be the *mystery* that was hidden within the Godhead before the beginning of the world (kosmos [creation]). As we shall see in a future session, this concept of Paul’s Gospel being the mystery hidden from before the foundation of the world is a very important concept and further proves that Paul’s Gospel is distinct from that of the earthly Kingdom Gospel. See also Rom 16:25; Eph 1:9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:25-29; 4:3. Paul’s Gospel was kept secret from all of the creation and not revealed until the Lord Himself revealed it to Paul years after the Lord’s ascension.

The *object* of Paul’s Gospel is the Body of Christ, which is properly defined as the non-incarnate righteous extension of Christ’s humanity – *the fulness of Christ’s Humanity*.

Eph 1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The Body of Christ is Christ’s extended non-incarnate humanity. As the wife in the marital union is the extension of her husband, so the Body of Christ is the non-incarnate extension of Christ’s Humanity all the time and represents and carries with it the full authority and glory of Christ (see Eph 5:23-33). This relationship was purchased by the finished work of Christ (Eph 2 & 5).

4. The Necessity of Paul’s Gospel

In this section we discuss several items that constitute the necessity of Paul’s Gospel as understood to be the completion of God’s Redemptive work in many related areas.

4.1. The Filling to the Full of Christ’s Non-Incarnate Extended Humanity

The Object of Paul’s Gospel, namely the Body of Christ completes or fulfills (fills to the full) the humanity of Christ.

Eph 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
 22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,
 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Verse 23 contains a remarkably rich theological idea concerning the Body of Christ as purchased by His blood, addressing our relationship to Christ. Verse 23 continues and completes the theme started in verse 22, where Paul states that Christ's resurrection has accomplished for the Body of Christ the complete authority over the entire created universe - "... and He gave all things to head up on behalf of the church".³ In other words, Christ's finished work has appropriated for His Body the responsibility and position of heading up the entire created order through Christ's resurrection and exaltation.

As His Body, the church must also share in His authority - this is what it means to be His "extended humanity". We as His Body share in His authority and His exaltation so that we can perform the eternal duties He has purchased for us. Since Christ in His Humanity was placed in authority over the entire created order including the angels so must His Body. His resurrection and exaltation by the Father have also accomplished these things for His Body. This is why Paul connects our being "His fullness" (human fullness – human extension) with His resurrection and exaltation; so that we as His fullness equally share in His exaltation over the entire created order.

How is this accomplished?

Upon the Savior's resurrection, the Father (vs.20) placed Him far above all principalities, powers, might, and dominion. Indeed, above every name that will ever be named. We see that this position means to be seated at the "Father's right hand". We must keep in mind that we are not talking of Christ in His deity (in His deity, Christ is already above the powers and principalities), but rather Christ in His humanity.⁴ It is Christ's humanity that has been placed above the entire created order.

Now if we continue reading in Ephesians we will find a remarkable theological point.

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
 6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

Verse 5 explicitly states that we have been made alive "with" Christ. Our eternal life and hope is fundamentally and intrinsically linked with Christ's exaltation. Reading further, verse 2:6 in this same context states that we (as His Body, His extended non-Incarnate humanity) have been equally seated with Christ precisely where He is seated at the Father's right hand. This is a remarkable eternal hope and a thought that should be meditated upon for some time. But there is more. Let us see exactly where we are to be eternally seated.

Rev 3:21 (Speaking to Elect Israel) To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Being seated at the right hand of the Father means that we will be seated on the Father's throne with Christ for eternity ruling the entire created universe (remember, the New Heavens and New Earth). This is an amazing reality and one that defies the author's imagination.

³ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῆ ἐκκλησία,

⁴ It is sometimes difficult to discuss the Person of Jesus of Nazareth as God Incarnate. Christ as the Incarnate Creator-God is 100% Deity and 100% Human which makes it difficult to simultaneously discuss distinct elements of Person of Christ (if element is even the right term). It is difficult to discuss distinct elements of the Savior without violating His unified Being. Difficult indeed. Nevertheless, it is our own finiteness that will always get in the way of fully understanding the Savior's constituency. Perhaps for this reason the Council of Chalcedon got it best when they decreed that Christ is "the fundamental diversity within the fundamental unity" and arguably we might leave it at that!

Now there is more to this “extended relationship” we have with Christ. The closeness, the fellowship is one of great intensity and can only be best described IN TYPE by the marital union of husband and wife.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

When Eve was created out of Adam, they were two distinct people. The marital union *immediately* enjoyed by them was in fact the celebration of Eve’s Creation and so the act of “becoming one” is an act that celebrates the creation of Woman. For this same reason we as members of His Body in particular, will eternally celebrate our salvation - our hope by being in perfect and eternal union with Christ our Savior; using delicate language this is what Paul is getting at in Eph 5.

For this reason the Body of Christ inherits the glory that Christ now has as the glorified God-Man, sitting upon the Father’s throne.

Philp 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

So, in conclusion,

We as members of the Body of Christ are Christ’s non-incarnate extended humanity and in so being represent His “fullness” in expressing His full authority over the entire created order.

4.2. Paul’s Gospel Provides the Father’s Inheritance - the Body of Christ

Each Member of the Trinity has as His Inheritance a specific part of God’s elect. The elect of God is not a generic, Unitarian-like, monolithic structure. Rather, the elect of God is a unified group within which are three distinct households (reflecting the Personhood of the Godhead).⁵

1. The Body of Christ
2. The Elect Nation of Israel
3. The Righteous Gentile Nations

As stated above, each of these elect households “map” to a particular Member of the Trinity.

Here we specifically deal with the Body of Christ, but for sake of completeness we identify the

⁵ The Elect of God reflects His nature as He is the Trinity; namely, the elect of God is trinal, comprising “a many and a one”. There are three distinct “households” within one elect group, just as the Godhead is three distinct Persons within one Unified Being.

relationships of the other two parts of God's elect through the figure below.

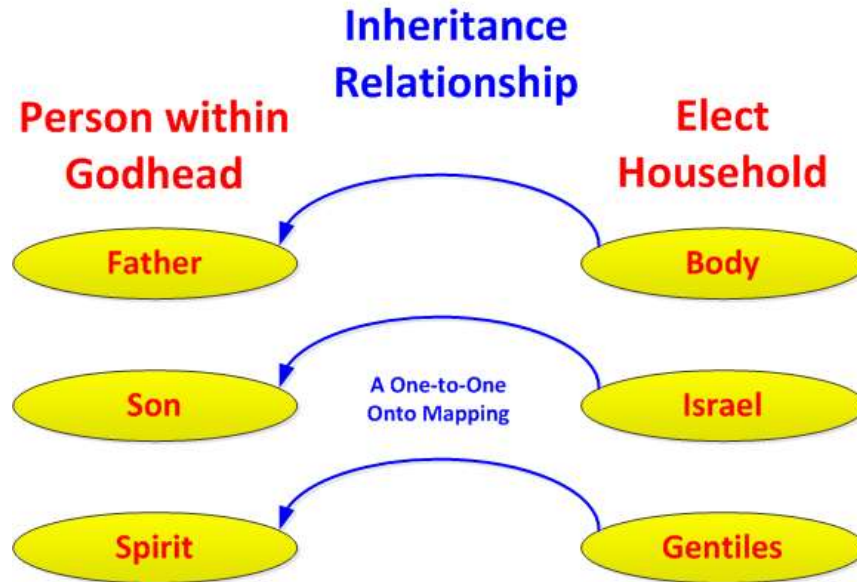


Figure 1. The Inheritances of the Godhead

As Figure 1 above indicates the elect nation of Israel is the inheritance of the Second Person, the Son, while the Gentile nations are the inheritance of the Third Person, the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to note that the Son was incarnated through the nation of Israel (the Son's Inheritance) and the Gentiles as they "fill the earth" are the inheritance of the Holy Spirit the Member of the Trinity Who specifically displays the omnipresence of God. It is important to briefly discuss what is meant by a "one-to-one", "onto" mapping as referred to in Figure 1. By "one-to-one" it means that for each unique Member of the Godhead, there is exactly one unique Household to which He is "mapped" (and visa-versa). In other words, each Member of the Godhead inherits His unique elect household from among His entire elect. By "onto" it is meant that if one has in mind the entire elect of God, you get the entire Godhead and visa-versa; that is, having the complete view of one side of the figure gets you the complete view of the other side, not merely a piece of the pie; rather the whole pie.

Eph 1:10 ... In Him (11) also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will

While a difficult passage to translate, the KJV Translators weren't quite as accurate as they should have been. A better translation is offered as

"In Him even we have been inherited..."

This partial translation gives the proper focus to be brought over into the English translation from the Koine. The idea is that we as Christ's Body have been inherited by the Father ... namely, we as the Body of Christ make up the Father's Inheritance. Seeing this emphasis provides the richness being driven in this context of Ephesians 1.

4.3. Paul's Gospel is Necessary for the Salvation of Elect Israel

Paul's Gospel and the Body of Christ were kept secret from all of the creation, including both space and time. They were not revealed to the cosmos until they were revealed to Paul by the Savior Himself some seven years after His ascension when appearing to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9).

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame (Hendiadys) before him (technically vs. 5 ought to start here) in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets (Hendiadys) by the Spirit (mapping to the One Spirit [Eph 4:4]);

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

The program setup for Israel and her Gentile nations was well known and established at creation (*from* the foundation of the world). Their salvation message is not only written in the stars (Gen 3:15 and the Mazzaroth), but is well known from the very earliest of books of the Bible – that a singular nation was to be the channel of blessing to the entire world of Gentile nations.

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

We see from the very start of the Bible (the Book of Genesis), the future earthly Kingdom program includes a distinct land, an ethnic (national) makeup, where a singular nation is to intercede, lead, and bless all of the other nations of the earth. This nation is to come out of the loins of Abraham, through Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs. The rest of the details of the Kingdom program are subsequently revealed throughout the Old Testament and non-Pauline New Testaments, with the exception of one "little" fact. We see this remarkable topic discussed in 1 Peter 1 and theologically detailed for us by Paul in Romans 11.

As God revealed the earthly Kingdom program in space and time it became clear to the studious elect of Israel that they were missing some important information that would enable them to understand God's complete prophetic plan laid out in Scripture for the earthly Kingdom Program. Specifically, they were missing the specific piece of information that would allow them to determine the amount of time between the two comings of Messiah.⁶ First, the coming of Messiah as the Suffering Servant, and second, the coming of Messiah as the Righteous Glorious Judge-King: This remarkable fact is stated for us by Peter himself:

1 Pet 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

These dear Kingdom saints did not know how much time there was to be between the sufferings of Christ and His coming back to set up His earthly Millennial kingdom. Indeed, Peter himself gives us the answer as to where to look to find the missing piece of information as to the duration between the Savior's two comings.

⁶ In fact, a better understanding of this is the time between the two prophetic Generations of Israel that detail Messiah, first in His role as suffering Servant (2nd Generation), and secondly, His role as King (Third Generation). For a detailed discussion on this very important topic see R.E. Walsh, The Clock of Generations, **Proceedings of the 1997 TGF Bible Conference**, Trinity Grace Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA, 1997.

2 Pet 3:15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,
 16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

It is Paul's Gospel that represents the delay between the first and second comings of Messiah; namely, the Church or Body-Age that lies between two specific Prophetic Generations⁷ of Israel: The Generation which sees Messiah, and the Generation which sees Anti-Messiah (AntiChrist).

As Paul discusses in Romans 11, God uses the fall of Israel in the Book of Acts to usher in His "secret" program, which Paul himself labels by inspiration as "the mystery the great" (Eph 5:32). This mystery is precisely Paul's Gospel, which states that God is now saving individuals to an eternal hope that places the saint onto the Father's Throne forever, ruling the entire created order (including the elect angels), and administratively equal to the righteous humanity of Christ. Through Israel's unbelief God ushers in the Body of Christ.

We see this theology taught in Romans.

Rom 11:30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

Paul explicitly states that through Israel's unbelief sinners during this dispensation have obtained mercy, namely salvation into the Body of Christ and equal to the righteous humanity of Christ.

And in turn, it is through this mercy received by the Body of Christ by which Israel receives her mercy as promised by the prophets of the Old and non-Pauline New Testaments.

Rom 11:31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

Thus, the coming about of the Body of Christ, namely the object of Paul's Gospel is necessary for the future salvation of elect Israel. It is through the mercy of God shown to us, that Israel will receive her mercy during her Third Generation as God cleanses the land and brings about the Millennial Kingdom, all of which starts at the Rapture of the Body of Christ. We see that the Rapture (Pre-Third Generation) is necessary for the salvation of the elect nation of Israel. Specifically the entering of the Body of Christ into its hope (third Heaven) at the Rapture is absolutely necessary for the salvation of elect Israel.

⁷ *Ibid*, Walsh

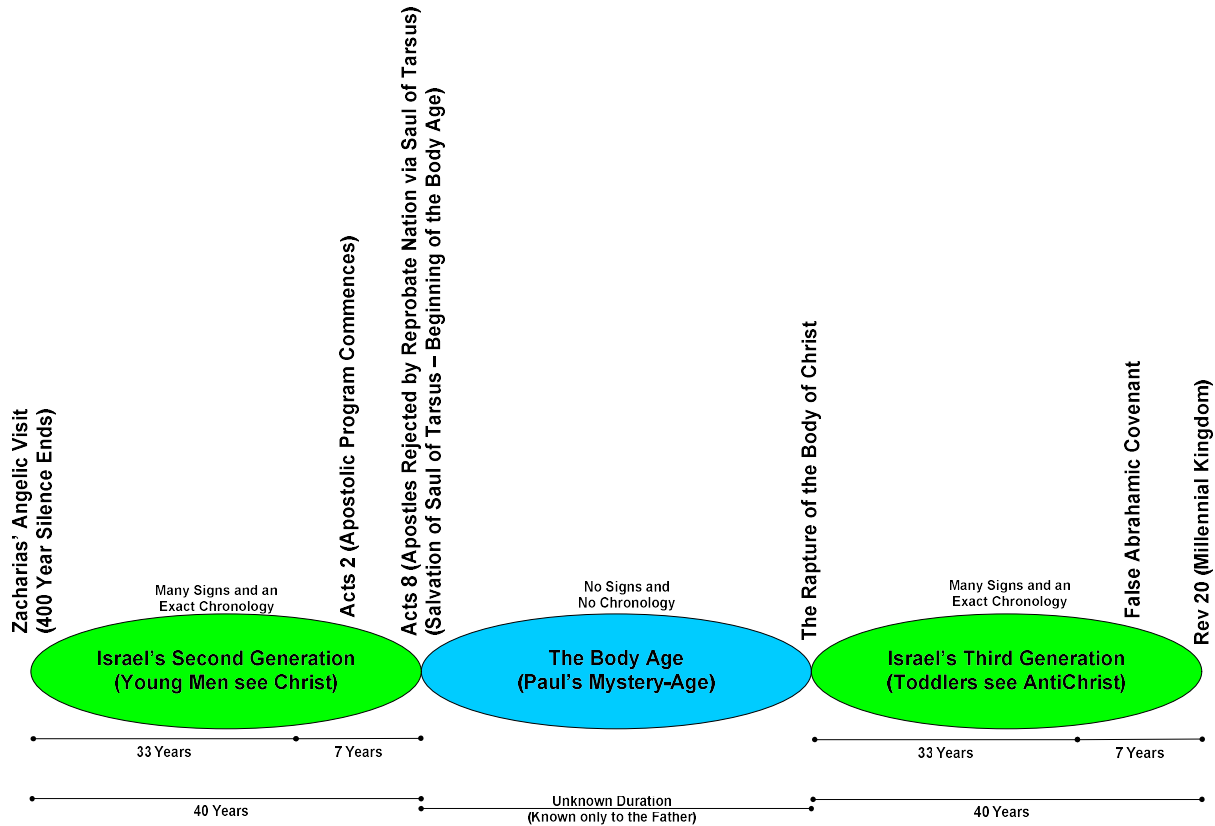


Figure 2. The Body-Age and Its Relationship to Israel's Prophetic Generations

We find that Israel's entire program is fundamentally linked to the Body Program, which was a "mystery" not revealed to Creation in any way until revealed unto Paul. In the minds of the elect Jews diligently searching out the solution to this equation (as discussed by Peter) there would have been no hint that the solution lie *outside* of Israel's program and therefore *outside* Israel's Scriptures. There was no reason for the elect of Israel to think that the solution lie outside of Israel's program; indeed, because Paul's Gospel is "unsearchable" there would have been no reason for an elect Jew to think otherwise but that the solution must lie within their own Scriptures (Old Testament and non-Pauline New Testament).

So, in conclusion, the salvation of the Body of Christ and the entering into its eternal hope at the Rapture are absolutely and directly necessary for the salvation of elect nation of Israel.

4.4. Paul's Gospel is Necessary for the Resumption of the Angelic Ministry

Paul explicitly states that all of creation groans as it waits for the Body of Christ to take its rightful position on the Father's Throne sitting with the Savior Himself. It is this joining together with Christ that finalizes the Body's relationship with Christ and is therefore the complete fulfillment of the joining of Christ to His extended Body.

Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature⁸ waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

⁸ The Greek word κτίσις is better translated *creation* rather than *creature*.

Verse 19 explicitly states that all of creation (including the angels) is waiting for the “manifestation of the sons of God” and in this context this phrase refers to the Body of Christ. The “manifestation of the sons of God” is the cosmic presentation of the Body of Christ to the entire universe as the extended righteous non-incarnate humanity of Christ, and as such provides for the complete “filling up” of Christ’s humanity as the Body represents His “filling up to the full”. All of this means that the angels are currently waiting for the Rapture event and the presentation of Christ with His extended non-incarnate Body as we will be jointly and equally seated with Christ upon the Father’s Throne ruling the entire created order - Christ and His righteous extended non-incarnate humanity. Indeed, the angels are diligently awaiting the Rapture because it is the next event on God’s prophetic calendar required for the angels to enter their own hope⁹ (as the mediators of Israel’s kingdom program). Consider the great archangel Michael ... he is waiting for the Rapture because he knows it will be only a short time when he is given permission to “kick” Satan out of heaven forever! It is a sure thing that there will be cheering in the streets of heaven at that great event (Rev 12:7-9).

4.5. Paul’s Gospel Finalizes God’s Trinal Work

The gospel given to Paul by the post-ascended Christ is the finishing capstone on God’s great salvation plan. While the Body of Christ is the last to appear in history, it is the first to enter its hope (at the Rapture). Israel is the second to appear in history (Abraham) and is second to enter their hope. Finally, the Gentiles which were the first to appear in history (righteous Abel) are last to enter into their hope.

Because God is the fundamental Trinity, His works must reflect His nature. God’s working in salvation must be trinal in nature. In this section we simply enumerate some other elements that reflect God’s Triune nature and completed by Paul’s Gospel as God’s third and final salvation economy.

⁹ When we talk about the hope the elect angels, we are not talking about “redemptive dispensations” rather it is their creation dispensation, since the elect angels are not redeemed... they never fell.

Some Trinal Elements of God's Salvation Plan Completed by Paul's Gospel			
Description	Body of Christ	Nation of Israel	Gentile Nations
Completes the trinal nature of God's elect	First in priority	Second in priority	Third in priority
Completes the trinal work of the Father's Electing Grace	The Grace of God caused Him to elect a group called the Body of Christ to administrate the entire created order.	The Grace of God caused Him to elect a group called the Nation of Israel to administrate the earthly Gentile nations.	The Grace of God caused Him to elect groups called the Gentile Nations to administrate and manage the earth.
Completes the trinal nature of Christ's Atonement	Christ's finished work has appropriated for the Body of Christ a non-ceremonially expressed faith.	Christ's finished work has appropriated for the nation of Israel a ceremonially expressed faith.	Christ's finished work has appropriated for the Gentile nations a faith expressed by submission to Israel.
Completes the trinal work of the Holy Spirit's Regenerating Power	Today the Spirit of God regenerates the sinner to savingly believe the gospel given to Paul.	The Spirit of God regenerated the sinner to savingly believe the earthly Kingdom Gospel.	The Spirit of God regenerated Gentile sinners to savingly believe the earthly Kingdom Gospel.
Completes the trinal Lordship of Christ	The relationship that the Body of Christ has with Christ is as He is Lord-Head.	The relationship that Israel has with Christ is as He is Lord-Messiah.	The relationship that the Gentiles have with Christ is as He is Lord-Second Adam or Lord-Perfect Man.

Table 1. Some Trinal Elements of God's Salvation Plan

5. Conclusions

The gospel given to Paul by the post-ascended Christ completes the salvation plan ordained of God. Paul calls his gospel a *dispensation*.

Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
 2 If ye have heard of the **dispensation** of the grace of God which is given me to you-
ward:
 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;

Since Paul defines or rather labels his gospel as a *dispensation*, it behooves us to briefly examine the concept of *dispensation*. The word *dispensation* actually comes from the Greek word οἰκονομία, which is a compound word from οἶκος meaning household and νομος meaning law; the compound word meaning *household law* or *household management*. οἰκονομία is the Greek word from which we get our English word *economy*. Thus, when we talk about a “dispensation” we are talking about a *salvation economy*.

Therefore we are looking for a particular household that is to be regenerated to a particular law or management scheme. Without getting into the details, there are three and only three (redemptive) salvation economies in Scripture and they are:

1. The Body of Christ
2. The elect Nation of Israel
3. The righteous Gentile nations

Each of these salvation economies is defined by the hope to which they have been called and assigned the law for that household.

The following figure illustrates these salvation economies as they relate to each other and work out in time.

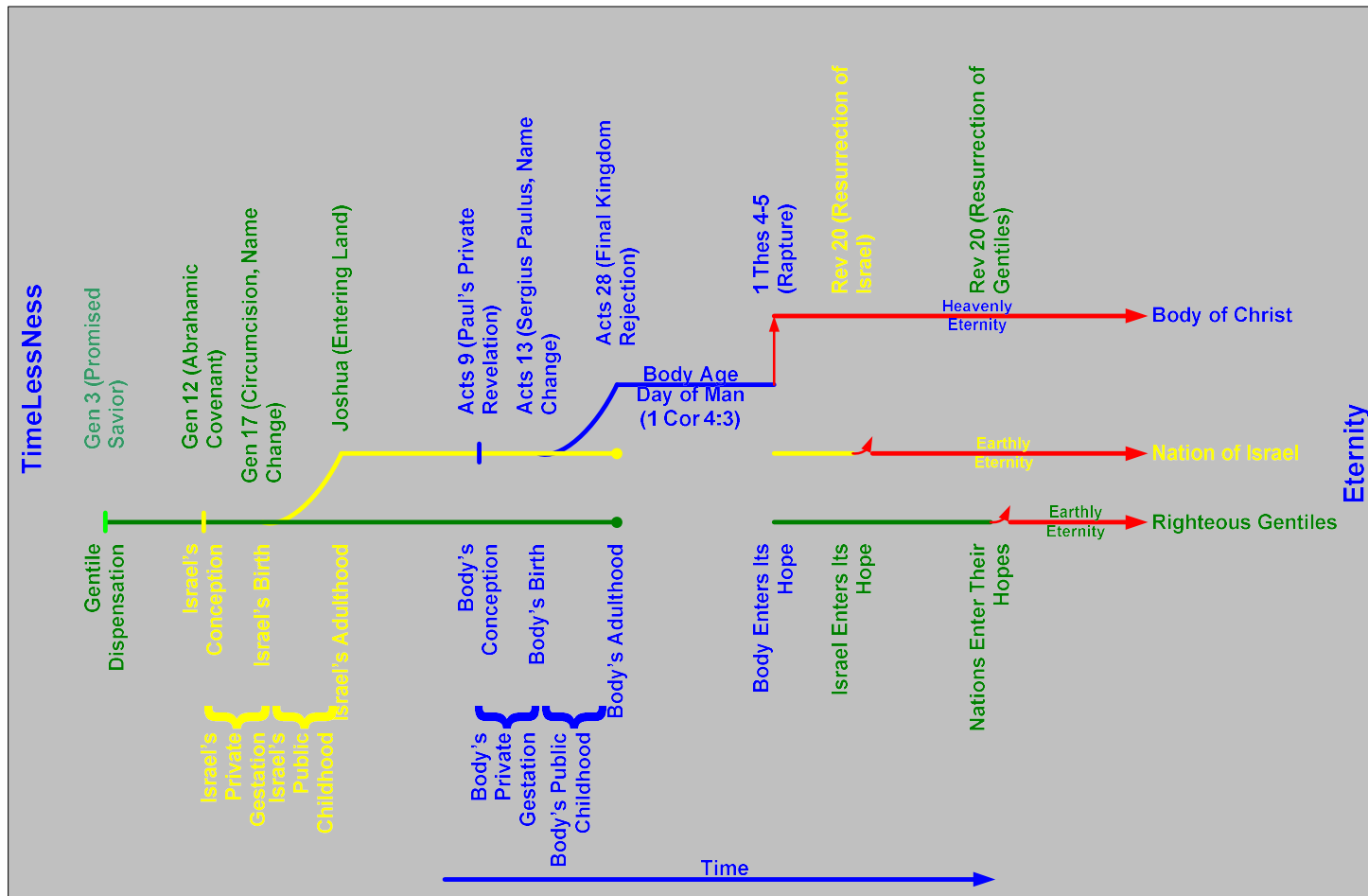


Figure 3. The Three Dispensations in Space and Time

The dispensations are identified by the different colored lines. Green is the Gentile salvation economy; Yellow is the Jewish salvation economy; and Blue is the Body of Christ salvation economy. The Gentile dispensation was revealed first in Gen 1 and Abel was the first member. The Jewish dispensation was introduced into creation with Abraham (Gen 12) being its first member; and the Body of Christ dispensation was introduced to Paul, by the Savior Himself on the road to Damascus (Acts 9).

More will be discussed in the sessions to come on this wonderful topic of the Dispensations of God, or God's Salvation Economies. Note however, that the proper definition of a dispensation is not as a "time period" as in traditional dispensationalism. Rather, a dispensation is an entire salvation economy that *works its way* out through time.

In conclusion then on this wonderful theme of the *Identification and Necessity of Paul's Gospel*, we see that Paul's Gospel provides for the completing of God's Salvation Plan throughout the ages and that the method of completion was held in silence as the mystery until revealed to Paul.

Paul's distinctive gospel is necessary to complete God's trinal plan of salvation.