

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

May 1998
Volume 12, No. 3

...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

The Harvest Of God's Will

Two Greek words are rendered, "will" in the KJV of the New Testament. According to a Greek lexicon, one, "thelo," means to desire or wish; the other, "boulomai," carries the idea of resolve or deliberate determination which results from desire. Matthew 1:19 shows the difference between the two words where we read, "**Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing (thelo:desiring) to make her a publick example, was minded (boulomai:determined) to put her away privily.**" We see here that desire precedes determination; it is the impulse and is stronger.

God has desires. He has wishes which He Himself satisfies, and He has desires which may or may not come to pass because He has made beings free to make choices. In this study we shall consider some of God's desires revealed in Scripture. In so doing, we may see the very heart of God the Father and His love for His families. We may see what His desires are concerning us in particular.

God the Father made plans for the family of Israel to serve Him by evangelizing the nations on earth, and He made plans for the church which is Christ's body to serve Him in the heavenlies. He has desires concerning those of His earthly purpose, and He has desires concerning those of His heavenly purpose. Some of His wishes for Israel are different from those for the body of Christ. Those for Israel can be found in the Old Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, and the epistles of the Acts era. In Paul's epistles after the period recorded in Acts, we find His specific desires for us as members of the church which is the body of Christ.

Reaping And Sowing #2

It was the Father's desire that both families know His plans for them and be prepared to serve Him. For that reason he sent them apostles, prophets, teachers, and pastors. Among those sent to Israel were the twelve apostles, then the seventy, and finally Paul, who went to the Jew first in every place and then to Gentiles there. To them, Paul preached that Christ, Israel's Savior-King, had risen and would return to earth, would reign as King over earth, and would fulfill the promises made to Israel. Paul declared that he was sent with that message, "**...by the will (desire) of God.**"

Paul went even as far as Rome where the Jews there also refused to believe and receive Christ as Messiah. They failed to fulfill God's will and serve Him. Therefore Christ did not return to them. And so we read that God sent His Salvation, Christ, to the Gentiles, in a new and glorious relationship, apart from His purpose for Israel. (Acts 28; Eph.2:11-16)

At that time, God revealed to the Apostle Paul that He had raised Christ to an exalted position above that of King over earth and that He had made Him Head over all spiritual beings, dominions, and powers, now and in the age to come. He revealed to him that He had also appointed Christ Head over a family of believers who would dwell with Him far above the heavens. He revealed that before the foundation of the world, He had the secret desire for a family beside Him in heavenly places. He had kept this longing hidden in His heart until He revealed it to Paul to make known. (Eph. 1-3)

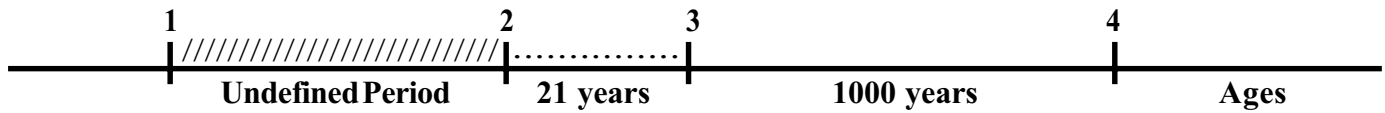
In keeping with His desire for a family beside Him in heavenly places, God revealed to Paul that He had chosen

those for this family *before* the foundation of the world. He had blessed them with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. He had designated them His sons and heirs. He had made them objects of His grace, in His Beloved. He had given them forgiveness, full deliverance from blame. And, now it was time to begin calling out those whom He had chosen.

Paul did not learn of this purpose of God from men or from the writings of the prophets. He said that, "**by revelation He (God) made known unto me the the mystery (secret)...**" (Eph.3:3) Thereafter, as Paul preached that secret, God revealed it to ones He had chosen. Paul wrote, "**He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of His will.**" (Eph.1:8,9)

The Father has revealed His secret desire to us also. We have been allowed to know His original plan which He made before Adam, even before sin spoiled His creation. We know this because God revealed it to the Apostle Paul for us. We may read of it in the epistles of Ephesians and Colossians where Paul declared that he was then an apostle with this message, "**...by the will of God.**" Paul's message and ministry had changed. Now, "**By the will of God,**" he became an apostle heralding God's mystery of the church which is Christ's body. Now it is the desire of the Father that believers know Christ as Head, and understand all that that relationship means. He wishes them to know what He has given them in His dear Son. This message is the last truth which God has sent to us. Are we willing (desiring) to know it?

Resurrection #10



How many resurrections are there? When do they occur? Who is in each?

We approach these questions with trepidation, realizing that what we say today may be altered tomorrow by further light on the Scriptures. Nevertheless, these questions beg answers and so we launch out to answer according to our present understanding.

How many resurrections are there? As of this writing, we find the resurrections of seven different parties occurring at four points in time. Those times of resurrection are numbered and placed on the line above, in the sequence which we believe they occur. We will consider each point and who is involved. In addition, at three of those times, there may be some living believers who will be changed and will put on immortality.

1) **Christ Jesus, The Lord:** The Man Christ Jesus was resurrected about 29AD. He said, **"I am He that**

liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev.1:18)

Christ is the firstfruits from the dead; He is the first and only one Who has resurrected out from among those who sleep in death. Forty days after His resurrection, He ascended. He passed through the earth's heaven into the realm called heavenly places, far above all heavens. There He is the **"...King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God...Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see:"** (1Tim.1:17; 6:16)

These verses tell us that outside of earth and beyond earth's heaven, the resurrected Christ dwells in glory and light so intense that no human dare come near. Although He was seen by men when He laid aside His glory and

dwelt in flesh, and was seen in visions after His ascension, no man or spiritual being has seen Him in His present glory. He is invisible.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the hidden ruler over all things, everywhere. When the Father raised Him from the dead, He **"...set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, 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: And hath put all things under His feet."** (Eph.1:20-22)

At a time known only to the Father, Christ will appear and show Himself visibly there above the heavens. He will openly and actively begin to exercise His sovereignty and use the keys which open the graves of the dead.

The resurrection of Christ is indicated by the number 1 on the line above.

J.H.

We talk so much about Christ our Savior, Christ our Redeemer. However, the people of the Old Testament also used the same terms of the God they worshipped. We also hear that God does not distribute this attribute and that He is the only Saviour. So, again, we must believe that the God of the Old Testament, and Christ of the New are the same Person.

The words "saviour" and "redeemer" are used of God and the Lord Jesus Christ without distinction. Check the readings below which are taken from Psalm 78:35 & 106:21; and then Titus 2:10, 2:13, 3:4 & 3:6: **"And they remembered that God was their rock, and The High God their redeemer."** **"They forgot God their saviour."** **"Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they**

The Deity Of Christ # 12 may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." **"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."** **"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared ...Which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."**

How can we doubt that this is one and the same person? In Isaiah 43:10-11, we have an extremely strong statement and this should answer the question: **"'Ye are My witnesses', saith the Lord, and My Servant (Israel) whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was not God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour."**

We also have the passage in Hosea 13:4 where, yet again, Jehovah declares: **"thou shalt know no god but Me; for there is no saviour beside Me."** John 4:42 talks of **"the Christ, the Saviour of the world."** There are numerous other New Testament references. If we consider Christ as separate from God, then we have a problem with His being the Saviour as He could not presume to be that if He was not God. However, if we realize and accept that Christ is God incarnate, it makes sense.

Another title that God in the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament share is, "the Almighty". In article 13, we will see what the Scriptures have to say about this.

L.A.

Resurrection #11

In the previous article we noted that the first and only resurrection has occurred. It is that of the Man Christ Jesus, Who is now our Lord and Head, and Who is hidden far above all heavens in the realm called heavenly places. His resurrection is indicated at point 1 on the time line. Now let us consider those of the next resurrection at point 2.

2) **The Church Which Is The Body Of Christ:** Members of this church will be resurrected at point 2 on the time line. When Christ Jesus, Who is hidden in heavenly places, makes Himself visible there, and as Lord over all begins to exercise His dominion, the members of His Body are there with Him. Col.3:4 tells us that, **“When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”**

“Glory” can refer to an attribute or to a place, or to both. When He ascended, Christ was **“...received up (directionally) into glory.”** (1Tim.3:16) He ascended both up into a location far above all heavens and also into a position of indescribable honor (glory). It is in that realm that the hidden Christ and His present glory will first be seen.

With Him, we, members of Christ’s Body, also have this hope of glory. We shall be resurrected and fitted for that glorious place. We shall be able to stand in the brightness of His presence and look upon Him. For He **“...shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body”** (body of glory). Phil 3:21 Our bodies of earth shall be left in the grave. We shall have bodies of glory like His. Paul said that our citizenship is in heaven, that our calling is a “high calling”, that is, literally a calling on high, or above, to glory.

Our appearing with Christ is said to be when the invisible Lord makes Himself visible far above all heavens. When answers the time that members of the Church which is Christ’s Body will be raised. We do not have specific events or number of years mentioned in relation to our resurrection. There are no prophetic Scriptures which we may study to learn of it, since God kept His purpose for this church secret in Himself until He re-

vealed it to the Apostle Paul about 64AD.

In addition, God did not reveal the duration of this present calling out to the Church which is Christ’s Body. This calling to serve in heavenly places began without fanfare or signs and it will close without fanfare or signs. Today’s calling to heavenly places came as an interruption in God’s calling out of Israel to serve on the earth. In today’s calling to the Body of Christ there are no national distinctions.

To Paul, a prisoner in Rome, God revealed that He had divorced Israel and sent Christ (the Messiah) to the nations. He appointed Paul then to make known the call for believers out of all nations to the Church called Christ’s Body. Since then, some have distinguished between God’s call to Israel and His call to the Body of Christ. They have put aside things pertaining to Israel and become knit together in the Body of Christ. They have forsaken shadows of Christ for Him, the reality. Those members who have died will rise, without trumpets or clouds of angels, to be with Him in heavenly places. (AC.28:28; Eph.2:11)

The Apostle Paul spoke of the time of our appearing, calling it **“the day of Christ.”** He urged those he ministered to, to remain faithful so that because of them, he could **“...rejoice in the day of Christ.”** (Phil.2:16) He also referred to it as, **“that day,”** when he would receive a crown from his Lord. (2Tim.4:8)

Some have suggested that we can not learn about our resurrection since the word “resurrection” is not used to describe the hope of the Body of Christ. However, such allegations are flimsy, ignoring the weight of evidence found in Paul’s last epistles.

For example, Ephesians 2:4-7 tells us that in God’s determination, we have been seated with Christ in heavenly places, where He will show His kindness to us in the ages to come. Obviously, we are not in the heavenlies yet, for we are on earth, as are the dead. But, God’s purposes are so certain that He can say things are done before they come to pass. And, since no mortal man can stand in the holiness of heavenly places, this re-

quires that we have been resurrected.

Eph.1:13,14 assures us that the holy spirit, or new nature with which we are sealed, is proof of our inheritance until our redemption is totally worked out. Our redemption was secured by Christ, but it will be fully realized when we rise, victors over death. Our inheritance is said to be in **“THE light,”** which describes that place of God’s glory above the heavens. Thus the new nature assures us that we shall be resurrected to receive our inheritance in that realm.

In one of his last epistles, Paul does use a word for resurrection of himself. He said that his aim was to be made conformable to Christ’s death and to **“...attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”** (Phil.3:10,11) The Greek for resurrection here is more accurately rendered “out-resurrection.” Did Paul mean here that he hoped to be resurrected out from the grave while others remained there?

Paul considered believers who lived for pleasure, as being asleep or dead. He wanted to live unlike those, **“...whose God is their belly...who mind earthly things.”** (Phil.3:19) His earnest desire was to live dead to himself and to the desires of the world, but alive unto God. He labored to keep his mind and body so under God’s control that it was as though he had died and been resurrected. In an earlier epistle he expressed this view saying, **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”** (Gal:2:20)

We, members of the Church which is the Body of Christ, are also instructed to consider ourselves dead, but alive to seek things above. We are told that we should live, **“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”** (Tit.2:13) Rotherham’s translation renders this verse saying we should live, “Prepared to welcome the happy hope and forthshining of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Christ Jesus.” When we see His glory we shall be resurrected and at home with Him in heavenly places. This will occur at point 2 on the timeline.

Before And After Acts 28:28

1. **Before:** Paul a prisoner for Israel's hope. Acts 28:20 **After:** Paul, a prisoner for Gentiles. Eph 3:1-3.
2. **Before:** Message of "Jesus" from the Law and prophets. Acts 28:23 **After:** Message hid in God until revealed to Paul. Eph 3:8,9; Col 1:25,26.
3. **Before:** One nation, a kingdom of priests, to bless nations. Gen 12:1-3; IPtr 2:9 **After:** The church, the body of believers to make God known to principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Eph 3:10; A new creation, one new man, of Jew and Gentile believers. Eph 2:14,15.
4. **Before:** Chosen for a purpose of God "since" the foundation of the world. Mt 25:31-34; 13:35; Ro 16:25; Heb 4:3; **After:** Chosen "before" the foundation of the world for a purpose of God. Eph 1:4.
5. **Before:** Seven advantages of Jews. Ro 9:3-5; Gentiles, grafts into Israel's hope and blessings. Rom 11:11,17 **After:** Equality of Jew and Gentile believer. Eph 2:11-22; 3:6.
6. **Before:** Law kept by Jewish believers. Acts 21:20-26 Gentiles must

abstain from 4 things. Acts 15:19,20
After: Law abolished for all believers and worship is totally "in spirit". Eph 2:15; Col 2:14-16.
7. **Before:** Israel's hope, the return of Christ and their kingdom restored. The New Jerusalem which comes to earth out of heaven. Acts 3:12-21; Heb 11:16; 12:22 **After:** The hope of the Body of Christ, His appearing above the heavens and they with Him there. Tit 2:13; Col 3:4; Eph 2:4-6.
8. **Before:** Miraculous signs and supernatural gifts, promised to Israel, given to every believer. Jer 31:31; Acts 2:22; Mrk 16:17,18; 1Cor 12:7-11 **After:** Signs and supernatural gifts cease. Power excelling given, to stand with truth. 1Tim 5:23; 2Tim 4:20; Phil 2:27; Eph 1:19; 4:7.
9. **Before:** Blessings with and through Israel, both physical and spiritual. Gal 3:8-14; Jms 5:15 **After:** Blessings with Christ, all spiritual, in heavenlies. Eph 1:3
10. **Before:** Word of salvation was sent to Israel with warning of consequences if they did not hear. Acts 13:26,40 **After:** Salvation of God is

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sent to the Gentiles as a result of Israel's failure. They will hear. Acts 28:28

11. **Before:** Believing Gentiles, like Cornelius, permitted to hear the word God sent to Israel. Acts 10:36 **After:** Gentiles received the word especially for them. (The Mystery) Eph 3:1-3

12. **Before:** Paul expected a change to immortality at Christ's return. 1Ths 4:16,17; 1Cor 15:51 **After:** Paul expected to die and appear up in glory at resurrection. 2Tim 4:6; Col 3:4

13. **Before:** Churches (plural) where believers are parts of the head of a body. 1Cor 12:12-20 **After:** One church, believers members of Christ's Body. He only is the Head. Eph 1:22,23

14. **Before:** Baptisms (many). Acts 10:45,47; 11:15-17; Rom 6:4; 1Cor 10:2; Heb 9:10 **After:** One baptism (into Christ's death). Eph 4:5; Col 2:12