

22- A Very Long Letter

In the area of Galatia (we call it Turkey today), those individuals who represented themselves as "intellectuals" and "scholars" insisted that the local, scriptural churches **had not** replaced the Jewish Theocracy, even though Jesus Christ, during His earthly ministry, had taught in Matthew 21:43-45 (printed below), Luke 12:32 and Luke 22:28-30 (printed below) that the local, scriptural churches **had** replaced them as **His executors** until the Catching Up or that event some people call the Rapture. ³² *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

²⁸ *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.* ²⁹ *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;* ³⁰ *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."* Luke 22:28-30

The local church in Ephesus was one of those local churches serving the Lord in the area we call Turkey today. In Revelation 2:1-7, Jesus Christ told the church at Ephesus that He had been aware of their deeds, the weariness they had endured while laboring for Him and their perseverance. In addition He had noted that the members had endeavored to scrutinize those worthless individuals who represented themselves as "intellectuals" and "scholars". Those worthless individuals told the church members that serving the Lord through a local New Testament church was not correct. That is one of the main reasons Paul found it necessary to write the long letter that was addressed to the churches in the area of Galatia. As you read Matthew 21:43-45 (printed below), please note that the kingdom that was taken away from the Jewish nation was either (1) **the Family of God** or it was (2) **the Bride of Christ**. If the Kingdom that was taken away from the Jewish nation and given to Christ's disciples was the Family of God, that would mean that after the Kingdom was taken from the Jewish nation, no Jew could become a member of the Family of God unless they became a member of a local, scriptural church! Do you really believe that? **We do not!** ⁴³ *I tell you that **God's kingdom will be taken from you and given to people who will do what he demands.*** ⁴⁴ *Anyone who stumbles over this stone will be crushed, and anyone it falls on will be smashed to pieces."* ⁴⁵ *When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these stories, they knew that Jesus was talking about them."* Matthew 21:43-45 (Contemporary English Version)

Again, Ephesus was one of the churches in the land of **Galatia** to whom Paul wrote a very long letter. In the year 2019, we call that land, the nation of Turkey. It was the area Paul

and his associates did most of their missionary work. Please note that Paul did not write to **the** " Galatian church " but, rather, to **the churches of Galatia**. Why? Because there was no such thing as "the Galatian church". Unfortunately, somewhere, sometime in the past that long letter was divided into two books in our library of books that we call our Bible. We can offer many proofs of the fact that Paul wrote a very long letter which was divided into the two books that are titled Galatians and Hebrews. **The first proof is that the book of Hebrews does not begin with a salutation from Paul as his other letters.** The reason there is no salutation is that it was the last part of a long letter Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia. That first part of the long letter **did** began with a salutation from Paul. Today we call the first part of the letter, the book of Galatians.

The second proof is that the theme of those two books is the same. In both of those two books, Galatians and Hebrews, Paul was addressing the same problem that Jesus Christ noted in **His** letter to the church of Ephesus. Please recall that the church of Ephesus was in the land of Galatia. In the long letter that Paul wrote, he emphasizes his desire that the members of the churches of Galatia (both Jews and non-Jews) finish their service to Jesus Christ just as they had started it. Jesus Christ had also expressed the same desire in His letter to the church at Ephesus. ⁴ *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* ⁵ *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Revelation 2:4-5 (King James Version)*

Third, when Paul wrote in Galatians 6:11, ¹¹ *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand*", he was not referring to the fact that he was using large letters as he wrote the letter, in spite of what some "scholars" say. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible tells us the English word "large" was translated from the Greek word "πηλίκος" (pronounced "pay-lee'-kos" in English). Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible says that the word "πηλίκος" was a quantitative form (measured by the **quantity** of something rather than its **quality**) and was used to show **how extensive the content of the letter was** in size, not **how large** the alphabetic letters he used to write the letter were in size.

The fourth proof is found in 2nd Peter 3:14-16 where Peter wrote to the Jewish members of the local, scriptural churches, ¹⁴ *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.* ¹⁵ *And account that*

*the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him **hath written unto you**; ¹⁶ As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."*

If the book of Hebrews was not the book Paul wrote to the Jewish members of the scriptural churches to whom Peter also wrote, which one **is** the book Paul wrote to the circumcised? The fact is, it **was** the part of the letter that it is now called the Book of Hebrews.

The fifth proof is, the book of Galatians has only six chapters. That is less chapters than the letters written to the church at Corinth. Why, then, did Paul say the letter he was writing was long? Paul said the letter was long because it was, indeed, a very long letter but somewhere, sometime, someone divided the letter into two books. We call your attention to the fact that the Jewish members Paul was writing to in the book of Hebrews (1) had accepted Christ as their Savior (2) had applied for scriptural baptism by the authority of a local New Testament church and (3) had become active in fulfilling the commission Jesus Christ gave His scriptural churches. Why is that noteworthy? Because the Jewish members of those scriptural churches knew that right after the Lord had led **the Jewish nation** out of Egypt, He had put **the Jewish nation** in charge of spreading the gospel. At that time they were **His executors** here on this earth.

*"¹ In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. ² For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. ³ And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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 19:1-6 (New King James Version)*

Most of the Jewish members of those scriptural churches **had been** raised to believe that the Jewish nation was still the executive phase of the Lord's kingdom just as some people today mistakenly believe the Jewish nation is still His executors. But the truth is, the Jewish nation is

not the executive phase of Christ's kingdom **during the Church Age**. Peter wrote his first letter to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. We know Peter was writing to church members because (1) in 1st Peter 3:21 he mentions they had been baptized, (2) he mentioned the Family of God outside their local church membership in 5:9, (4) He refers to the fact that they belonged to a flock and urged the elders among them to feed their flock in 5:1-4, (5) Peter relayed to them greetings from another local church in 5:13 and (3) Peter speaks of them being part of a spiritual house in 2:1-10 that at one time were not a people but were at that time, a people. ¹ *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,* ² *as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,* ³ *if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* ⁴ *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,* ⁵ *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* ⁶ *Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."* ⁷ *Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"* ⁸ *and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.* ⁹ *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 marvelous light;* ¹⁰ *who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

After salvation, the Jewish members of those scriptural churches learned that Jesus Christ had offered to restore **the Jewish nation** as His executives but **the Jewish nation** had refused. We find in Matthew 10:5-7, (Revised Standard Version), " ⁵ *These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans,* ⁶ *but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* ⁷ *And preach as you go, saying, `The kingdom of Heaven is at hand.`". The Greek word that was translated "lost" in Matthew 10:6 is the Greek word (G622), "ἀπόλλυμι" (pronounced ap-ol'-loo-mee in English). The Greek word "ἀπόλλυμι" in Matthew 10:6 conveys the teaching that the nation of Israel had wandered off*

from the Lord just as the same Greek word (G622) conveyed the idea that the sheep Jesus Christ referred to in Luke 15:4-6 had wandered off and was lost to the owner.

¹⁰ *He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not.* ¹¹ **He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.** ¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name:* ¹³ *who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* ¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." John 1:10-14 (American Standard Version)*

Therefore, because of the sinfulness and the unbelief that Jesus Christ found in the house of Israel, the executive phase of His kingdom was taken, temporally, from the Jewish nation. According to Jeremiah 31:31-34, a new contract will be made with the Jewish nation when the nation returns to Him during the Great Tribulation. " ³¹ *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:* ³² *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:* ³³ *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.* ³⁴ *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (King James Version)*

During His earthly ministry, Jesus authorized the members of His local New Testament churches to be the executive phase of His kingdom until He returns for the Catching Up. ⁴² *Jesus replied, "You surely know that the Scriptures say, 'The stone that the builders tossed aside is now the most important stone of all. This is something the Lord has done, and it is amazing to us.* ⁴³ *I tell you that God's kingdom will be taken from you and given to people who will do what he demands.* ⁴⁴ *Anyone who stumbles over this stone will be crushed, and anyone it falls on will be smashed to pieces."* ⁴⁵ *When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these stories, they knew that Jesus was talking about them." Matthew 21:42-45 (Contemporary English Version)*

As Paul left one mission field and went to another area of Asia Minor (the country we also call Galatia) and Greece, religious "intellectuals" and "scholars" would move in to fill in the void created by Paul's absence. They were teaching that salvation did, indeed, come through the promised Messiah but afterward, service was only accomplished by following all the ceremonial laws as well as the moral laws that were given through Moses. In other words, they had convinced many members of Christ's scriptural churches to consider "jumping ship", renouncing their membership in a local New Testament church and attempting to serve the Lord as a good Jew. It seems that many of the "intellectuals" and "scholars" were also requiring that all who followed their teachings adhere faithfully to traditions which had been passed down for generations in order to (1) retain their salvation and to (2) please the God they professed to serve. This teaching is still being offered as an attitude or conclusion formed on the basis of incomplete information, in many "assemblies" today. Therefore, Paul wrote in Galatians 4:8-11, " ⁸ *But in the past, when you didn't know God, you were slaves to things that are not really gods at all.* ⁹ *But now that you know God, or rather have been known by God, how can you turn back again to those powerless and bankrupt basic principles? Why do you want to become their slaves all over again?* ¹⁰ *You are observing days, months, seasons, and years.* ¹¹ *I'm afraid for you. Maybe my work for you has been wasted!" Galatians 4:8-11 (International Standard Version)*

Unfortunately, many members of the churches in Galatia were like many members of the Lords churches today. They were impressed by the "degrees" those teachers merchandised and many members of Christ's churches in Galatia quickly vaulted those teachers of error into positions of leadership. " ⁴ *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*" Revelation 2:4

In the portion of Paul's long letter that he evidently wrote to the Hebrews, he reminded them in chapter three that **IF** they did not "jump ship" and **IF** they held fast to their confidence, as baptized members of local New Testament churches, they would remain members of the Bride of Christ. Then they would be part of His household and would be residing with Christ in the Holy City Jerusalem on the New Earth (His abode). Paul wrote to the scriptural, New Testament churches, " ⁵ *Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's household, as a testimony to what would be said [in the future].* ⁶ *But Christ was faithful as a Son over His household. And we are*

that household if we hold on to the courage and the confidence of our hope. Hebrews 3:5-6
(Holman Christian Standard Bible)

Paul was **not** saying that **if** those to whom he was writing **did not** hold on to the courage and the confidence of their hope, they would lose their salvation. Paul was saying that they would not be part of Christ's household, that is to say, they would not be residing with Christ **in** the Holy City Jerusalem on the New Earth (His abode) as part of His bride. Paul was saying they would be wedding guests and would be living outside the Holy City Jerusalem (living outside Christ's abode) on the New Earth. Please remember that after the "wedding reception", the bride resides in the house of the groom but the wedding guests do not go home with the groom and reside with the groom. The wedding guests may enter the grooms house later but they do not setup residence in the grooms abode. Paul was saying the wedding guests will go back and forth, in and out of the Holy City Jerusalem (through the gates) in order to worship the Living God. Each of us must answer one basic question. Do we want to reside with Jesus Christ for eternity in the Holy City Jerusalem or do we want to live outside the city and enter into the Holy City Jerusalem to worship?

The Lord had Paul bring his case to a conclusion in Hebrews 12 when he reminded them of what we will see when we get to the New Earth. He urged them to hold on to the courage and the confidence of our hope so that they would be part of "*the general assembly and **church** of the firstborn, which are written in heaven*", and not just part of the wedding guests, that is to say, "*the spirits of just men made perfect*."

"¹⁸ **For ye are not come** unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, ¹⁹ And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: ²⁰ (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: ²¹ And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) ²² **But ye are come** (1) unto mount Sion, and (2) unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and (3) to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ (4) **To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven**, and (5) to God the Judge of all, and (6) **to the spirits of just men made**

perfect,²⁴ *And (7) to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and (8) to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Hebrews 12:18-24 (King James Version)*

If there will not be two groups of saved people on the New Earth, why did Paul convey to us that all of the saved will see two groups? Who can deny what Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote? Paul tells us that we will see two groups of saved in the Third Heaven and on the New Earth when we go into eternity. Jesus Christ said there would be those in the Third Heaven who have been bound into a special group by His local, scriptural, New Testament churches. They are (4) **the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven**. Jesus Christ certainly did not tell us His local churches had the ability to bind a person into the Lambs Book of Life! He had to be teaching that His churches have the authority to bind them into another group! Paul tells us that besides (4) **the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven**, there will be another group of those who are made just through the blood of the Lamb of God, that is, (6) **to the spirits of just men made perfect**. They will be wedding guests, like John the Baptist, at the Marriage Supper of The Lamb and they will be part of those nations who will be living outside the Holy City Jerusalem.

Please remember that, as we shared in other papers, John the Baptist had the authority to baptize others but that he was murdered before he could receive scriptural baptism from the only other person who had been given that authority, Jesus Christ. " ²⁷ *John answered, "A person can receive only what God gives. ²⁸ You yourselves heard me say, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only the one God sent to prepare the way for him.' ²⁹ The bride always belongs to the bridegroom. The **friend** who helps the bridegroom just waits and listens. He is happy just to hear the bridegroom talk. That's how I feel now. I am so happy that he is here. ³⁰ He must become more and more important, and I must become less important." John 3:27-30 (Easy-To-Read Version)*

You are welcome to correspond with us.

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