

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus Christ

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*A*lthough Jesus Christ came to be the Savior for all men, He did not provide for salvation during His three and one-half year ministry. Christ's atoning work was performed at Calvary. What, then, was the purpose then of the *earthly teaching ministry* of Christ? What did He minister, and to *whom*? Moreover, what relationship does this ministry have with the Body of Christ?

The answers to these questions are answered for us by Paul the apostle, in the book of Romans.

*Now I say that Jesus Christ **was a minister of the Circumcision** for the truth of God, to **confirm** the promises made unto the fathers* (Romans 15:8).

The BENEFACTORS of the Earthly Teaching Ministry of Jesus Christ

The first thing that Paul reveals to us concerning the *earthly* teaching ministry of Jesus Christ is that it was clearly to the **Circumcision**.

The record of Scripture is quite clear that Christ "**was a minister of the Circumcision**" (Romans 15:8). Jesus Christ, while on earth, dealt *exclusively* with Israel (c.f. Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24; Romans 9:5; Ephesians 2:12).

Why was there this limitation in His earthly ministry? Because according to Romans chapter one, the Gentiles (or nations) had turned away from God and God had in turn *given them up*. At the time of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry, God was in covenant relationship with Israel *only*. God's plan was (and again one day will be) to reach Israel *first*, and *then*, through Israel's instrumentality, reach the nations (Gentiles – see Mark 7:27; Isaiah 60:3).

The PURPOSE of the Earthly Teaching Ministry of Jesus Christ

The second thing that Paul reveals to us concerning Christ's *earthly* teaching ministry was clearly one of **confirmation**.

The record of Scripture is again quite clear: the purpose of the *earthly* teaching ministry of Jesus Christ was to "to **confirm** the promises made unto the fathers" (Romans 15:8).

Christ did not come with a new message, but rather His teaching was one of confirming the promises of the *Old Testament* Scriptures (Matthew 5:17). We must remember that this backslidden nation was near to God by way of her covenants (Ephesians 2:12). Christ was calling these "lost sheep of the house of Israel" back into right relationship with himself through the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Matthew 4:23; 10:7-8). John the Baptist introduced this ministry (Matthew 3:2-3; Mark 1:2-6).

The BEARING of the Earthly Teaching Ministry of Jesus Christ on the Body of Christ Today

There are certain things which are common in *all* dispensations. We may *apply* the *earthly* teaching ministry of Jesus Christ, just as we would any other teachings of the Old Testament. Yet just as with Old Testament teaching, we must always remember that while *ALL* Scripture is written *FOR* us, it is not all written *TO* us, nor is it all *ABOUT* us.

In the "Gospels" (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) Christ's *earthly* teachings were *TO Israel*, just as in Paul's letters (Romans – Philemon) Christ's *heavenly* teaching ministry is *TO the Body of Christ*.

Christ in His *heavenly* ministry gave to Paul "the **revelation** of the **mystery**," which is the foundation for *truth* in our day.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more (II Corinthians 5:16).

*If any man think himself to be ... spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the **commandments of the LORD*** (I Corinthians 14:37).

Taken from the *Bible Student's Notebook*[™], a weekly Bible study publication available in two formats (electronic and printed)

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Study Shelf, PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963
1-800-784-6010 / www.StudyShelf.com

B I B L E S T U D E N T ' S P R E S S [™]
W i n d b e r , P e n n s y l v a n i a

