

The Address on the Envelope

By

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Preface

Lest those, who having read this study may feel that they have been robbed of so much that is precious in the Word - so much from which they derive comfort and help, we would like to make it clear that while the various books and parts of the Scriptures are definitely ADDRESSED TO different companies of people at different times we MUST distinguish between; the *interpretation* and *application* of the Word.

Interpretation deals first with those to whom the passage of Scripture is addressed. When *this* has been settled we can *then* apply the passage to ourselves if this is consistent with truth revealed in this present age of grace, this is a legitimate application of Scripture.

A great deal of confusion and error has resulted among the people of God by spiritualizing. This method of reading the Scriptures ignores the primary interpretation and the literal meaning of a passage or portion of the Word and reads into it so-called spiritual ideas which may be nothing more than the personal opinion of the reader and which may be utterly at variance with other parts of the Bible.

There are truths in the Word of God which are BASIC to *all* the companies with their respective callings and hopes - Salvation, Redemption, Justification etc., and there are countless passages and portions of Scripture that are unspeakably precious, from which lessons can be learned and applied to our own hearts and lives.

A beautiful passage in Isaiah 26:3 will illustrate what is meant: "For thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee".

This is true for all time to every trusting heart although as has been pointed out, the prophecy is concerning Judah and Jerusalem" and is primarily addressed to them.

"I really don't understand it"

"What's the matter?"

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"Well, I've just opened a letter, and I can't make head nor tail of it".

"Are you sure that it's for you? Is it addressed *TO* you?"

"Have you got the envelope?"

"Oh dear, I've read a letter that was intended for someone else - I've just looked at the envelope, and find that it wasn't addressed to *ME*, although there are references to me in it".

I expect we have all had a similar experience, and could give instances where the neglect to read the address on the envelope has not only been amusing, but also has had very tragic consequences.

In our everyday life we attach a great deal of importance to our correspondence, letters received by us from day to day, and not only is confusion caused but also very real harm done through neglecting to make sure that it has been really addressed to *US*.

There are a great many people who are dealing with the Word of God as we sometimes do with our letters; the Bible, as we know, was written at various times to different companies of people. For instance, instructions were given to the children of Israel, and blessings promised to them. Attempts are often made to follow these instructions and to claim blessings that are not for us at all, although they make very profitable reading because:

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (God-breathed) and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3: 16).

As an example of what is meant by reading the address on the envelope turn to the Epistle of James:

"James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad". (One hears about the ten tribes which were "lost" but here James sends a greeting to the whole twelve). The Epistle to the Hebrews was addressed to the Hebrews who are said to be "partakers of the *heavenly* calling" (Heb.3:1), unlike the Jewish Nation who have an *earthly* one.

In one's own experience, and the experience of very many true believers, not only perplexity but also real distress have been caused by applying to themselves warnings which were written to these particular believers at that time; some have even felt that they had committed the unpardonable sin of Hebrews chapter six.

For a further example, open the prophecy of Isaiah ... "The vision of Isaiah which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem". What untold harm has been done, and ridicule

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and contempt brought upon the Bible all down the years, by not reading the address on the envelope, and applying prophecies addressed to the Jew as a Nation, to the "Church".

In our ordinary correspondence we also attach much importance, and rightly so, to dates or times. The value of any correspondence depends largely on its dates, vitally important on all legal documents and an absolute necessity if the subject matter refers to coming or going. To this all will agree. Surely then if correct dates are a necessity for the clear understanding of ordinary correspondence, the necessity applies with greater force when we seek to understand what **GOD** has written concerning matters of spiritual life and destiny.

It has been stated that, before seeking to understand any part of the Bible, four points should first of all be settled.

- (1) By whom the particular prophecy or epistle was written.
- (2) To whom it was addressed.
- (3) The special circumstances which called for the writing.
- (4) The date of the message.

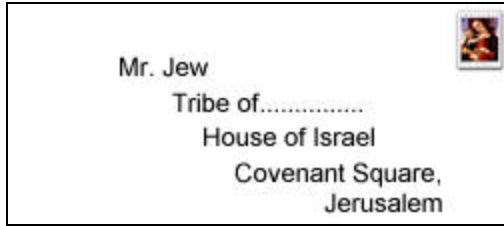
While we cannot always fix a definite or exact **DATE** for the events of Scripture history, we **CAN** arrive at the **TIMES** of such events, and we are told that "God hath spoken at sundry times, and in divers manners (in many ways)" (Heb.1:1) .

Time is a vital factor in what is called in 2 Timothy 1:9 "Age-times" or the ages of time. During these age-times we read of a purpose, the purpose of the ages. This purpose concerns different companies of people, each of these being called or marked out beforehand for an inheritance. This purpose is secured by two immutable things, God's promise and His oath which are bound up with the redemptive work of Christ (Heb. 6:18).

I have before me a number of envelopes addressed to these different companies of people and I should like to open these envelopes and read what is written inside, but before doing so, I intend to read the address on the envelope and ask you the question "Is this letter for **YOU**?". As I ask that, I am asking **YOU - YOU** who are a Gentile, living in what is known as the dispensation of Grace -- **HERE**, and **NOW**, to face up to what is written, and ask yourself "Did God **REALLY** intend that for **ME**? Am I the subject of it? Do I fit the description, without spiritualizing or making it meaningless? Do I conform to the rules and obey the precepts contained in it?"

The first letter I am going to read is addressed to:

The Address on the Envelope



Herewith is the status of your position:

You were born a Jew, of the Nation of Israel.

You have been chosen above all the nations that are upon the earth (Deut.14:2).

“I have made a covenant with thee” (Exod.34:27), an unconditional covenant” (Gen. 15).

“I have given you a land for your inheritance from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates” (Gen. 15: 18).

You are My Son, My firstborn (Exod.4:22) By Adoption.

My Vineyard (Isa. 5, Jer. 2).

My Sheep (Matt. 10:6, Ezek. 34).

My People (Deut. 29).

My Wife (Jer. 3:14).

My Glory (Isa. 46: 13).

You are “under Law” (Exod. 20, 21, 22, 23).

The Law given to you was written with the finger of God, the writing was the writing of God (Exod. 31:18, 32:16). The Lord has given you the Sabbath (Exod. 31:13-18). “It is a sign between Me and you, Wherefore the Children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant”. A “sign” is a symbol, a thing by which something else is represented. This "symbol" was the truth of the peculiar relationship which existed between God and Israel. (Just as a wedding ring is a symbol between husband and wife).

Ye shall keep **ALL** My Sabbaths - (Seventh day, seven days. seven weeks, seven months, seven years) note the “sevens” in Israel's history).

Ye shall keep **ALL** My Offerings (Lev. 7:37, 38).

Ye shall keep **ALL** My Commandments (Deut. 30:8).

Ye shall keep **ALL** My Statutes (Deut. 6:24).

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Ye shall keep the Feasts of the Lord (Lev. 23:4). (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Harvest, Tabernacles).

Ye shall give tithes to Me (Deut. 14: 22-29).

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose (Deut. 12).

You need My Priests to make an Atonement for you. (Lev. 16 and 17).

Every man-child shall be circumcised (Gen. 17).

Ye shall not do after the manner of the Nations (Lev. 20:23).

There are beasts which ye shall not eat (Lev. 11:47).

Garments which ye shall not wear (Deut. 22:11).

Seed which ye shall not sow (Deut. 22:9, Lev. 19:19).

Ye shall not do after the abominations of the Nations:

SPIRITISM forbidden -- ***IDOLATRY*** forbidden.

“Ye shall have no other gods but Me”.

You are “not reckoned among the Nations” (Num.23:9).

You write differently.

You speak differently.

Your look are different.

When God blesses you, He does so ***DIRECTLY***; when He punishes you, He does so through other Nations, whereas, when He punishes them, He does so directly, and when He blesses them, He does so ***THROUGH YOU***. “I will bless thee ... and thou shalt be a blessing ... in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12).

“What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed (they were entrusted with) the Living Utterances of God” (Rom. 3:1 ,2).

Blessed with National privileges

(The Fig Tree, Jer. 24; Matt. 21).

Blessed with Religious privileges

(The Olive Tree, Rom. 11).

Blessed with Spiritual and Temporal blessings

(The Vine, Psa. 80:8, Isa. 5:27).

AND YET ...

They are the sheep that are lost (Matt. 10:6), that went astray (Isa.53:6). The fig tree that yielded no fruit (Matt.21:19). The vine that brought forth wild grapes (Isa. 5:2). The son that went into a far country (Luke 15). The wife that is an adulteress (Jer. 3:8, 14).

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A sinful Nation.

A seed of evil-doers.

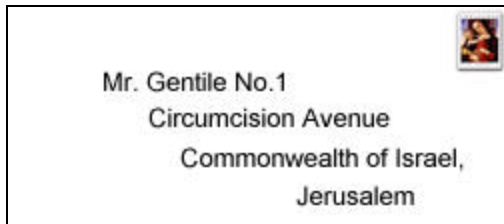
The date or time of this letter is the time when, as recorded in Genesis 12, God said to Abraham:

“I will make of thee a great Nation ... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”.

This promise was given to Isaac, and later to Jacob, who was called Israel (Gen.32:28), and who became the father of the great Israelitish Nation.

Are you, as a Gentile, included in this letter?

I have here another letter, addressed to Mr. Gentile, which applies to the Gentiles who lived among the time of Abraham and onwards:



Mr. Gentile, born a Gentile, of a Nation --

You are not under law (Rom. 2:4).

You are not the chosen Nation (Israel).

You have no land for your inheritance (Exod.6:8).

You are aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel.

Strangers from the Covenants of Promise (Eph 2:12).

"The stranger that is within thy gates" (Exod.20:10).

You have no hope, you are without God (Eph. 2:12).

You shall not eat the Passover (Exod.12:43, 45).

You can be admitted into the Commonwealth of Israel only on the ground of circumcision (Exod.12:48).

Your sons shall also be circumcised.

You are **THEN** a proselyte (A Gentile who comes over to the Jew's religion).

You are **THEN** under Law (Exod.30, 12:49).

You can **THEN** keep the Passover. You can be a partaker of the blessings of the land through Israel and the Tribe.

You come under the Atonement (Lev.16:29).

You share the harvest of the Land (Lev.23:22).

You need My Priests, the Levites to minister unto you.

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You shall keep the Sabbaths (Lev. 25:6).
You shall keep the Feasts.
You shall keep the Offerings (Lev. 17:8).

Are **YOU** as a Gentile, living today, included in this letter?

The third envelope that I now open, contains two letters addressed to two companies of people:

Mr. Saved Gentile.
Mr. Hebrew Christian.

They were both living at the same time in what is known as the Acts period - a transitional period dating from the Crucifixion to Paul's imprisonment in Rome; a period of about 33 years.

Jews which believe (Acts 21:20).
Gentiles which believe (Acts 21:25).

Although with regard to their standing in Christ they were one (Gal. 3:28), yet during this period they did not lose their identity.



You were born a Jew, and are living during the Acts period. when there were two companies of believers. You accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior as well as your Messiah.

You are justified by faith.

You are no longer offering the blood of bulls and goats which could never take away sin (Heb. 10:4). You are trusting in the one Offering of the body of Jesus Christ made once for all (Heb. 10: 10).

You came into salvation and blessing **BEFORE** “Mr. Saved Gentile” because as a Jew, you were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. You were in Jerusalem, or had “gone up” to keep the Feast.

You heard a marvelous sermon addressed specially to you, and preached by Peter:

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“Ye men of Judah ... Ye men of Israel” (Acts 2).

You were told that the prophecy was spoken by the prophet Joel, and that it concerned a “promise unto you and unto your children” (Acts 2:39) “Your sons and daughters”(Acts 2:17).

On this day 3,000 of you believed and were baptized. Another 5,000 were added later (Acts 2:41, 4:4).

You began to perform evidential miracles the "signs" that Christ said would follow “them that believe” (Mark 16: 17-20).

You cast out demons.
You spoke in tongues.
You took up serpents.
You were able to drink “any deadly thing”.
You laid hands on the sick, and they recovered.
You even raised the dead (Acts 9:36-41).

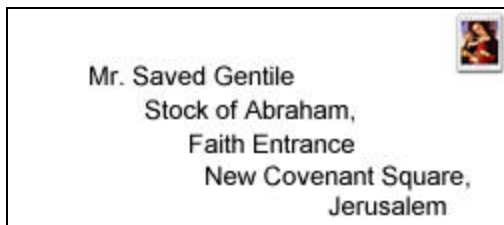
Even the shadow of Peter passing by, did wonders in healing the sick who had been brought into the streets, and laid on beds and couches (Acts 5:15) and also special miracles of healing were wrought by Paul (Acts 19:11,12 ; 28:3,8,9). Your hope was a millennial one (Rom. 15 :12,13) for here the Apostle Paul places it, when the Lord reigns over the Gentiles as prophesied in the great millennial chapter of Isaiah eleven.

You were waiting for the rest of the Nation to repent and be converted, when the Lord Jesus Christ would immediately return, and all the glowing prophecies of the O.T. regarding the earthly Kingdom would be fulfilled (Acts 3: 19-26).

The basis of all your salvation and hope is the New Covenant made by God with your nation (Jer. 31:31). “This is the blood of the New Covenant” (Matt.28:28). (The N.T. usage, must conform to the O.T. usage and its translation).

If you are a saved Gentile this letter is not addressed to **YOU** today.

The letter I am now going to read to you is addressed to:



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You were born a Gentile, and also lived during the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles.

Some of the letters written during that period contain references to you.

As a Gentile you were not present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost: it was a “feast of the Jews”. The promise of the outpouring of the Spirit was not given to **YOU**, but to Israel (Acts 1). “I send the promise of My Father upon **YOU**” (Luke 24:49).

It was not until eight years after Pentecost that the “door of faith” was opened to you, and God “granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life” (Acts 11 :18).

You turned to God from idols.

You turned from pagan darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

You received the forgiveness of sins, and to the astonishment of the saved Jews, on you, a saved Gentile, was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:45). You became a partaker of Israel's spiritual blessings (Rom.11:17).

You thus have doctrinal blessings, and dispensational privileges in being linked with the covenant people (Israel).

Unlike the proselyte (Mr. Gentile No. 1), you are not under law, but under grace. “If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing” (Gal.5:2).

You are members of a body (hands, feet, head, eyes, (1 Cor. 12), but you are not on an equality, dispensationally, with the Jewish believer.

The Jew is “first” for the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) and judgment and blessing (2 :9,10).

The word of repentance and blessing is to the Jew first (Acts 3:26, 13:46, 26:20).

You are only a “wild olive” grafted into the true olive (Israel) (Rom. 11:24), and are reminded that the root (Israel) bears you, and not the other way round (Rom. 11:18).

You are warned that you can be “cut off” from this position (Rom. 11:20-22).

Although you are not under law, there are “decrees” which you must keep – “four necessary things” (Acts 15:28).

This was like the “middle wall of partition” between you and Jewish believers (Eph.2:15). The literal “middle wall” was an inscription on one of the Temple enclosure walls reading as follows:

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“No one, being a foreigner (Gentile) may enter in to the enclosure around the Holy Place. Whosoever is apprehended will himself be to blame for his death which will certainly follow”.

Your hope is the “hope of Israel” entertained by Mr. Hebrew Christian, as you have become a sharer of his blessings.

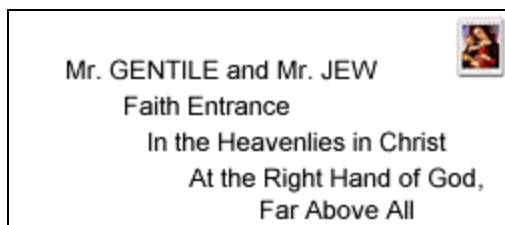
If you, as a Gentile, disconnect yourself from the Jew in this Acts period how are you going to have the blessings there described?

Mr. Hebrew Christian was warned about the possibility of turning back to Judaism, and so trampling under foot the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:29). Such would draw back unto perdition (10:39) and lose any possibility of pleasing God and earning a reward. If on the other hand he went on to perfection (maturity Heb.6:1), and suffered and endured (Heb. 10:32-35) as those in Hebrews 11:33-40, or as described in Revelation 3:12 (overcomers), then, as a reward, he could look forward to a better country connected with the Heavenly Jerusalem (Heb.11:16, 12:22,23). In which case the address on the envelope to him would be:



Mr. Saved Gentile if he likewise endured, and was faithful to the end, would also share this reward and special privilege of a higher sphere of blessing - indeed a “better hope” than the earthly one.

This last letter which I am going to read to you, is addressed to two companies of believers; it contains the final revelation to Paul after Israel as a Nation had been set aside for the time being. (Acts 28:25-28)



You were born a Gentile or a Jew.
You have redemption through the blood of Christ.
You are not under Law, but under Grace.
The Jew has **NO** advantage here.

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You are **ONE NEW MAN** created in Christ Jesus. (Eph.2:15)

You are no longer (as a Gentile) “afar off” - no more “strangers and foreigners” (Eph.2:19).

The “middle wall of partition” has been broken down (Eph.2:14).

You have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph.2: 18).

You are fellow citizens of the Holiest of all (Eph.2: 19).

Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. A building fitly framed together ... for an habitation of God.

You have been chosen in Christ, before the “overthrow” of the world (Eph. 1 :4).

Predestinated unto sonship (adoption) (Eph. 1:5).

You are Members of the Body of which Christ is the Head.

You have equal rights and privileges, the Jew is no longer “first”.

You have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of your inheritance (Eph.1:13, 14).

You have (unlike any other company) been made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, and will be manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

If you would like to know more of your unique position and peculiar privileges, read the Epistles which are specially addressed to you --- Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 2 Timothy.

In these Epistles we read of a Mystery – “**HID IN GOD**” (Eph 3:9), not hidden in the Scriptures. Colossians chapter one states that it was “hid from ages and from generations”. It was a sacred secret revealed to Paul, and made known by him after Acts 28:28, concerning a far above all heavenly company. The **ONE BODY** (Eph.4) of which Christ is the Head.

This Company is blessed with every spiritual blessing “in the Heavens” (Eph.1). The expression “in the Heavens” occurs only five times in the New Testament and these occurrences are found in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

This is a sphere of blessing which is absolutely unique. It was to this place that Christ ascended “to the Right Hand of God” far above all heavens (Eph. 4), and the members of His Body have not only been raised, but seated in Him there. It is not merely heavenly blessings, for this is the portion of all who are in Christ, but a **PLACE** of blessing distinct from the New Earth or Heavenly City which comes down from God out of heaven (Rev. 21). What an unspeakable privilege! Our life now hid with Christ in God, awaiting the day when this body of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body, and at His glorious appearing be manifested with Him in glory.

In the Acts period we find a body which began at Pentecost consisting of Jews only. To this body the Gentiles were added after Peter received the vision of the sheet (chapter 10), eight years after Pentecost, but in the revelation given to Paul after Acts

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28:28, we have a new creation, a body of the twain (Jew and Gentile), both having equal rights and privileges.

How unique the blessing! Chosen in Christ **BEFORE** (not “from” Matt. 25:34) the foundation (overthrow) of the world (Eph. 1). Seated together in Him, far above all principality and power and might, and dominion and every name that is named --- that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

“The church which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”.

I trust we have seen quite clearly in these letters, the distinction between those addressed:

- (1) to the Nation of Israel, commencing from Genesis 12,
- (2) to saved Jews, (Hebrew Christians) and saved Gentiles during the Acts period, and
- (3) “to the faithful in Christ Jesus” the letters written by Paul during his prison ministry, after Israel as a nation had been set aside.

Some may be asking the question “Is there any other company, or are **ALL** since Paul received the revelation of the Mystery (Secret, hid in God Eph. 3:9) members of the **ONE BODY** (Eph. 4:4 and 1:20-23) of which Christ is the Head?”

We shall have to open the Gospel of John to get our answer, where we shall find that John alone of all the N.T. writers speaks of the "Marriage of the Lamb".

In Matthew 22 we read :

“A certain king made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that had been bidden - or previously called to the wedding (lit. wedding feast)”.

In the O.T. over and over again, God had sent messengers to His People Israel, but in 2 Chronicles 36:16 we read that they mocked the messengers, and despised His words, and scoffed at His Prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His People till “**THERE WAS NO REMEDY**”. These words occur on the last page of the Hebrew Bible. Four hundred years of silence and then God, in the Parable of the Vineyard says – “They will reverence My Son”. He had sent His servants in the O.T., now in the New, the Lord Jesus Christ sends His servants to the same people.

Not only did those who were called not come, but they slew those who invited them. Again He sent forth other servants, as recorded in the Acts period, but they gave no heed, and went away, one to his own farm, another to his own merchandise, and they

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entreated them spitefully. This resulted in the King's wrath, and in 1 Thess. 2:15, 16, we read that "wrath is come upon them to the uttermost", referring to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in A.D.70. Those who **HAD** been called in the O.T. and re-called or bidden in the New, are now pronounced "not worthy" and the servants are sent into the highways. When the Lord sent out His disciples He said "Go not into the **WAY** of the Gentiles, but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. 10), but **NOW** in Matthew 22:9 the command is "Go ye, into the highways" (the word in Matthew 10 "way" and the word "highway" in Matthew 22 are the same Greek word). Through Israel's failure to respond, the invitation is extended to the Gentiles, and the wedding chamber is filled with guests:

"He came unto His own (i.e. the people of Israel) and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God. even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1 : 12).

In the A.V. the word translated "son" in this verse is the Greek word teknon - a child, and if we would distinguish between the things that differ we must distinguish between the word for child (born into a family), and the Greek word huiiothesia (sonship), giving the inheritance of the firstborn --- the heir.

There are three Companies in Scripture who have the first-born's position, (referring to inheritance):

- (1) Israel, My Son - My Firstborn (Exod.4:22). Israel according to the flesh (Rom. 9). The *earthly* Company.
- (2) The *Heavenly* City Company who are called in Hebrews 12:23 the **CHURCH** (*ecclesia*, i.e. a called-out assembly) of the **FIRSTBORN** (Gal. 4:5) (the Heavenly Jerusalem).
- (3) The Members of the Body of which Christ is the Head. the **CHURCH** (*ecclesia*) which is His Body and His Fullness (Eph.1:22,23), predestinated unto sonship (adoption) (Eph.1:4), in the heavenly places "" all" at the right hand of God.

To the Gentile, therefore, John has a special message. A message for the **WORLD**:

"God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting (age-lasting) life" (John 3:16).

The "guests" called, or bidden, to the Marriage feast are not the "wife" (Note Jer. 3:14 and Rev. 19) nor the "bride" (Rev. 21), nor the Body - of which Christ is the Head, but a special class who are privileged to attend the wedding of the King's Son as **GUESTS**, during the 1,000 years of His reign over the earth during the Millennium Kingdom.

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These must have “life” through His Name: they must have the Wedding garment.

In closing let us read together Revelation 19:6-9:

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, 'Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage (marriage-feast) of the Lamb is come, and His wife (Greek *gune*) hath made herself ready'. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me,

Blessed are they which are **CALLED** (invited) unto the marriage supper of the Lamb".

For fuller understanding concerning this Company read John and the Mystery by C.H. Welch, where Scriptural proof is given to show:

1. The Dispensational place of John's Gospel.
2. Its "Calling --- Guests of the Marriage of the Lamb.
3. Its relationship to the family of faith --- "children" not "sons".
4. That the words of Ephesians 2:4-6 are a precious heritage of the Church of the Mystery (secret), and find no place in the writings of John, neither in gospel, Epistles nor Revelation.

*"It shall greatly helpe ye to understande
Scripture, if thou mark
not only what is spoken, or written,
but of whom,
and to whom,
with what words,
at what time,
where,
to what intent,
with what circumstance,
considering what goeth before, and what
followeth".*

Miles Coverdale

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“Study (be diligent) to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needth not to be ashamed RIGHTLY DIVIDING the word of Truth”

(2 Timothy 2:15).

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