

THE SCRIPTURES

In Romans 15:4, we have a reference made to the "scriptures": "For whatsoever things were **written aforetime** were **written for our learning**, that we through patience [endurance] and comfort [exhortation] of the **scriptures** might have hope." This verse also tells us that the scriptures were written in the past, which is a reference to the Old Testament. This thought is confirmed in the following verses when Jesus joined himself with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke 24:27 "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the **scriptures** the things concerning himself." He began with Moses and included the prophets when he expounded to them the scriptures. In Luke 24:32, "And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the **scriptures**?" He explained the scriptures to these disciples. We can see from Luke 24:44-45, "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written **in the law of Moses**, and *in* the **prophets**, and *in* the **psalms**, concerning me. 45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might **understand the scriptures**," The scriptures start with the Law of Moses, and include the Psalms and the prophets. The Old Testament scriptures are divided into the Law (Genesis-Deuteronomy), History (Joshua-Esther), Poetry (Job-Song of Solomon), and the Prophets (Isaiah-Malachi). What we see is that within the scripture, we have the law, the psalms and the prophets. In other words, the scripture is made up of parts. Hebrews 1:1 "God, who at **sundry times** [many parts] and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,"

ALL SCRIPTURE WAS GIVEN BY GOD

The scriptures are not all prophecy. Prophecy is just a part of the scriptures. 2 Peter 1:19-21 "We have also a more sure word of **prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20. Knowing this first that no **prophecy of the scripture** is of any private interpretation. 21. For the **prophecy** came not in old time by the will of man: but **holy men** of God spake *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*." When the New Testament was added, it too, became part of the scriptures so that 2 Timothy 3:16-17 can be applied to us who are alive today: "**All scripture** *is* given by **inspiration of God**, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." can be applied to us who are alive today.

SOME SCRIPTURE IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

Many that wrote the scriptures did not understand what they wrote. The Old Testament writers did not understand the salvation that was to be revealed at the end of the age, which pertains to our inheritance and not birth into the family of God. 1 Peter 1:10-12 "Of which salvation **the prophets** have **inquired** 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 [for] Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12. Unto whom it was **revealed**, that **not unto themselves**, but **unto us** they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the **angels desire to look into**." Peter commented about some of Paul's writing ministry as being hard to understand in 2 Peter 3:15-16 "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." This salvation is not the common salvation that all of the prophets in the Old Testament knew about because they were saved. This salvation is about a heavenly inheritance.

PARABLES USED TO VEIL TRUTH

During the teaching ministry of Jesus, he taught doctrine in parables. Mark 4:34 "But **without** a **parable** spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." The parables stimulated questions that he explained to those who had questions. Most were not interested in the meaning of the parables. By teaching in parables he was making sure that the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven would stay a mystery. Matthew 13:10-11 "And the disciples c

ame, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Matthew 13:16 "But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

THE WORD OF GOD IS VEILED

It seems to me that God continues to hide things in the scriptures. Proverbs 25:2 "*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing* : but the honour of kings *is* to search out a matter." The mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens are still being veiled. That mystery is the Word of God as found in the parable of the sower according to Luke 8:8-11, "And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, **He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.** 9. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10. And he said, Unto you it is given to know **the mysteries of the kingdom of God**: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11. Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**" The seed sown in Matthew 13, Mark 4; and Luke 8 is the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens and defined as the Word of God in Luke 8:11. This mystery was not being revealed to Gentiles or Samaritans. The mystery was not the common salvation because Samaritans and Gentiles have always been able to enter into the common salvation. Examples of that are Rahab and the whole nation of Nineveh. Samaritans were descendents of Joseph and Asenath, a gentile.

In John 10:34-35 "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35. If he called them gods, unto whom **the word of God** came, and the scripture cannot be broken;"

we have the words ?law?, ?scriptures?, and the phrase ?the wor

d of God? in two verses. The pronouns ?your? and ?whom? are references to the nation of Israel. God gave Israel the law as well as the ?word of God.? At the beginning the ?word of God? was offered only to the nation of Israel. John the Baptist began the ministry of the Word of God to the nation of Israel when he began to preach the baptism of repentance in the wilderness.

Luke 3:2 ? . . . **the word of God**

came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." John's message is further defined in Matthew 3:1-2 "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was the nation of Israel that responded to John's ministry in Matthew 3:5 "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,"

John tells us that everyone who is born from above will see the kingdom of God in John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot **see the kingdom of God.**" In addition to being born from above to see the kingdom, John the Baptist and Jesus were teaching what was required to enter into the kingdom of God. There is a difference between seeing and entering. You can see a baseball game but if you are qualified you enter into playing the game on one of the teams. The Lord tells us what it takes to enter into the kingdom in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall **enter into the kingdom of heaven**; but he that **doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven." To enter into the kingdom of the heavens is to rule and reign over the earth from the heavens. To qualify for positions in His kingdom you have to do the will of the Father. We are told that **brethren** are the ones who do the will of the Father in Matthew 12:50, "For whosoever shall **do the will of my Father** which is in heaven, the same is my **brother**, . . ." We are also told that it is the brethren who listen to the Word of God and do it. Luke 8:21 "And he answered and said unto them, . . . my **brethren** are these which hear the **word of God**, and do it." It is the **word of God** that teaches us how to qualify to enter into the kingdom of the heavens and not how to be born into the family of God.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD BRINGS BLESSING

Jesus taught that those who would hear the word of God and do it would be blessed in Luke 11:28, ? . . . *blessed are* they that **hear** [present active] the **word of God**, and **keep** [present active, do] it." It is the hearing of the word of God preached that allows faith to come into our lives. Romans 10:17 "So then **faith cometh** by hearing, and hearing **by the word of God.**"

If we have faith we are able to have grace to serve God acceptably, Hebrews 12:28 ? . . . let us have [present active subjunctive, may we have] grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Accessing grace by faith allows us to stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2 "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." It is the standing fast and rejoicing in hope that a

re the evidences of faith. Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The message of the word of God presents all that is required to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Faith gives substance to that heavenly kingdom. Faith also stimulates evidence of our hope by our obedience and lifestyle to gain an entrance into that coming kingdom and glory.

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

I am persuaded that it would be profitable to look at passages in the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament that have in them the phrase "word of God". Knowing that the phrase, "word of God," refers to the mysteries of the kingdom of God or heaven, will help us to understand what the Holy Spirit wanted the churches, as well as individuals, to understand about that truth.

Acts Chapter 1

The last forty days that Jesus was here on earth he taught things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3 "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the **kingdom of God.**" This would have included the mysteries of the kingdom of God as well.

Acts Chapter 4

What part did the Word of God play in the ministry of the Apostles and disciples in the book of Acts? Acts 4:31 "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the **word of God** with boldness." Being filled with the Holy Spirit they spake the word of God with boldness.

Acts Chapter 6

We see that the priority of the twelve Apostles was the word of God in Acts 6:2, "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the **word of God**, and serve tables." They further emphasized the significance of that message in Acts 6:4 "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

Acts Chapter 8

The next occurrence of the **word of God** is found in Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the **word** [of God, minor mms]." Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans in Acts 8:5 "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." What was the subject found in the message of preaching Christ? The preaching of the **word**

in verse 8 and Christ in verse 5 was indeed the preaching of the "word of God" which are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The preaching of the word and Christ is further defined in Acts 8:12 "But when they believed Philip **preaching** the **things** concerning the **kingdom of God** (which is the seed and the mysteries of the kingdom), and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the word of God was being preached in Samaria according to Acts 8:14 "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received **the word of God**, they sent unto them Peter and John:" When Peter and John were come down in verse 15, they prayed for them that they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift being the promise of an everlasting life found in 1 John 2:25, and not the Holy Spirit himself. Peter, John, and Philip continued to preach the word of God throughout Samaria according to Acts 8:25 "And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans."

Acts Chapter 8 in Gaza

This was the same message that Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch in Gaza; and associated with the mysteries of the kingdom of God, is baptism. After hearing Philip preach, the eunuch asked Philip a question in Acts 8:36-38: ". . . and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37. And Philip said, If thou **believest** [present active] with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I **believe** [present active] that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

Acts Chapter 9, Paul

Paul was accosted on the road to Damascus and was led to a house on Straight Street where he was to wait to find out what

the Lord wanted him to do. Ananias received a vision from the Lord as to what he would have him do. In Acts 9:15 "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my **name** before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Ananias told Paul of the vision he had received from the Lord. He was to bear his name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. What is the significance of bearing his name before these peoples? I believe this is found in Revelation 19:13 ". . . **his name** is called **The Word of God.**" Paul was commissioned to preach the mysteries of the kingdom of God before Gentiles, kings, and the nation of Israel. Before he could do that he had to have his eyes opened to see Acts 9:18 "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." The scales falling from his eyes opened his understanding of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Believing the mysteries of the kingdom, he was baptized. What did Paul begin to do? I believe this is found in Acts 9:20; "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." This is same message that Philip preached unto the Ethiopian Jew on the road to Gaza and when the eunuch believed in the present tense he was baptized.

Acts Chapters 10 and 11

The word of God was preached in the house of Cornelius in Acts 10, but we do not learn that until we read of it in Acts 11:1 "And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received **the word of God.**" Cornelius was not a lost Gentile but a saved Gentile who had embraced the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as his God. The message of the word of God was, for a time, not offered to Gentiles and Samaritans who were in the family of God, but only to Israel who had ears to hear. There were those who still resisted Peter's testimony as is shown Acts 11:19 "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution . . . preaching the word to none but unto the **Jews only.**"

I think we should look at Peter's message to Cornelius in Acts 10:37 "That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached." It is easy to see that the message that was published throughout Judaea was the word of God. Peter was preaching a message to Gentiles that he had previously been forbidden to do in the past. The Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his house with speaking in languages to convince Peter and those that were with him, that truly Gentiles were now included as far as having an entrance into the kingdom of the heavens. Cornelius and his house were baptized. When someone is baptized they have received the word of God and believe, present active, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Acts Chapter 13 at Salamis on Cyprus

The next time we find the phrase "the word of God" is in Acts 13:5 "And when they were at Salamis (which is on the East side of the isle of Cyprus), they preached **the word of God in the synagogues** of the Jews: . . ." I think it is noteworthy to notice that Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue in Salamis. This message of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven continued to be to the Jew first, saved Israel, and also to saved Gentiles until Acts 28:28. Today this message is to both saved Jew and saved Gentile alike. Apparently there were neither saved Jew nor Gentile that responded to the message of the Word of God. No church was established in Salamis.

Keep in mind that the Word of God is for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. You cannot hear and understand the word of God until you are saved, in the family of God. The mystery of the kingdom of God is the seed that was sown to the nation of Israel and that seed was the Word of God. This message is not about the common salvation but the so great salvation of Hebrews 2:3 "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord (the kingdom of heaven is at hand), and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;" This salvation was preached only to the perishing sheep of the house of Israel and it was a message of an inheritance in the kingdom of the heavens.

Now when you read that Paul and his companions sought out the local synagogue they were looking for saved Jews who might have ears to hear and eyes to see. Just as Cornelius, a saved Gentile, worshiped the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the temple, so there were Gentile proselytes worshiping at local synagogues throughout the Roman Empire. The door had been opened for Gentiles to receive the message of the kingdom by Peter in Acts 10; so saved Gentiles were responding to and believing the word of the kingdom, the Word of God.

Acts Chapter 13 at Paphos on Cyprus

Paul, Barnabas, and John crossed Cyprus to Paphos in Acts 13:7-8 "Which (Elymas, a Jew and a sorcerer) was with the deputy of the country (city of Paphos, on West side of the isle of Cyprus), Sergius Paulus (who I believe is a Gentile), a

prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith." Keep in mind that faith is what it takes to please God. Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*:. . ." How does faith come? Romans 10:17 "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." A sorcerer is one who is controlled by Satan and his host and they do not want any child of God to please Him. We do read in Acts 13:12 "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." There is no proof that the deputy was baptized which would have been the next step for him if he believed, present tense, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God as in Acts 8:37. Baptism is burying those who have died to self, which is required if one is going to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. We will see later that the Philippian jailor believed and then was baptized after he received the word of God in Acts 16:33. Another observation is that there was no church established on Cyprus.

Acts Chapter 13 at Antioch in Pisidia

The next place that we find the word of God being preached is in Antioch in Pisidia. Acts 13:14 "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down." Paul's message makes mention of the ministry of John the Baptist in Acts 13:24 "When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." John was preaching the word of God to save Israel who had ears to hear. Paul was doing the same thing here as well. We see this in Acts 13:26: "Men and brethren, children [sons] of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent."

After Paul's ministry of the Word of God in the synagogue, we see many following Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas persuaded them to continue in His grace in Acts 13:43 "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, **persuaded** them to **continue** [present active] **in the grace** of God." Paul knew what the Grace of God would do for them. Acts 20:32 "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Paul also knew that if grace reigned in their lives that they would reign in the coming kingdom and glory. Romans 5:21 ". . . **so might grace reign** through **righteousness** unto [leading to] **eternal** [age-lasting kingdom] **life** by Jesus Christ our Lord." For grace to reign we must continue in the faith. Acts 14:22 "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to **continue** [present active] in the **faith**, and that we must through much tribulation **enter** into the **kingdom of God**." It takes faith for grace to reign. Romans 5:2 "By whom Christ) also we have access by **faith** into this **grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice in **hope of the glory** of God." Continuing in faith will cause our hope of glory to be a living hope. The word of God reveals this hope of glory. Colossians 1:27 "To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this **mystery** (the word of God) among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**:"

Acts 13:44 "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear **the word of God**." The Jews spoke against the Word of God, and this is the unpardonable sin. By speaking against, blaspheming, what Paul preached was the same as speaking against the Holy Spirit and that will not be pardoned in this age or in the kingdom age that is coming. Matthew 12:32 ". . . whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall **not** be **forgiven** him, neither in this **world** [age], neither **in the world to come** [present active participle, the one coming]." After the Jews opposed the word of God, then Paul and Barnabas told the Jews that they would not be ministering to them any longer but to Gentiles in Acts 13:46 "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that **the word of God** should first have been spoken to you (Jew first): but seeing ye put it (the message of the word of God) from you, and judge yourselves **unworthy** of everlasting [age-lasting, kingdom] life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

Acts Chapter 16 ? The Jailor

This passage of scripture is very significant. It shows the progression of going from the common salvation to the so great salvation of Hebrews 2:3 ". . . so great salvation; which at the **first** began to be spoken by the Lord (the word of God)". The common salvation is presented in verses 30 and 31. The so great salvation is opened up by the word of God in verses 32 through 34. Acts 16:30-31 "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe [aorist tense] on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt **be saved**, and thy house. The so great salvation is presented in Acts 16:32-33 "And they spake unto him **the word of the Lord** [God, 24th edition of Nestles], and to all that were in his house. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and **was baptized**, he and all his, straightway."

Jesus Christ is the one who died on the cross for all of mankind. To believe, aorist tense, that Jesus died for your sins and accept that sacrifice is to be saved, born from above. To believe, present tense, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God qualifies one to be baptized which is the first step one takes to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. It was the preaching of the word of God that brings one to the understanding of baptism and the kingdom of the heavens. Without the message of the Word of God baptism is not relevant.

Acts Chapter 17 at Thessalonica

Acts 17:1-2 "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to **Thessalonica**, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures," These two verses help us to see that when Paul went to Thessalonica he reasoned with the Jews out of the scriptures. What Paul was doing by reasoning out of the scriptures was to present to them the ?word of God? according to Acts 17:13 "But when the **Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea**, they came thither **also**, and stirred up the people." There were those who responded to the word of God in Thessalonica according to 1 Thessalonians 2:13 "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received **the word of God** which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, **the word of God**, which effectually **worketh** [present middle] also in you that **believe** [present active]." They received the word of God as it is the truth.

Notice that, the word of God, worketh, present tense, effectually in those that believe, in the present tense. It does not work effectively in those who only believe, aorist tense, that Jesus died for them leading to the common salvation. There are those who believe in the aorist tense and are saved that later receive the word of God with joy, and continue to believe, present tense, the word of God and produce fruit that glorifies the Father.

Acts Chapter 17 at Berea

Paul had to leave Thessalonica. The preaching of the word of God in Thessalonica met with such resistance that it became dangerous for Paul to continue his ministry in that city. Acts 17:10-13 "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews. *11*. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the **scriptures** daily, whether **those things** (the Word of God, verse 13) were so. *12*. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. *13*. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that **the word of God** was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people." The message that the word of God gives is a message that is vehemently attacked and resisted even to this day. Those who have been studying and searching the scriptures for the truth often have less trouble understanding the message of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. They are able to ask intelligent questions. It seems that those who oppose the mysteries of the kingdom and who are not able to refute it from the scriptures often resort to stirring up the people against the teacher. This is what happened to Paul.

Acts Chapter 18 at Corinth

In Corinth Paul reasoned with the Jews as he had in many synagogues and cities. When Silas and Timotheus came, Paul was stirred in spirit to press the truth that Jesus was the Christ. Acts 18:6 says that the Jews resisted this truth and Paul cast them off symbolically by shaking his garment in their presence. The shaking of the garment is similar to shaking the dust from your feet in the presence of those who rejected the message of the kingdom in the Gospels as well as in Acts 13:51. Acts 18:6-8 "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing (present active participle) believed (verse 11, the Word of God), and were baptized." In Acts 18:11 "And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching **the word of God** among them.?"

Acts Chapter 19 at Ephesus

The phrase ?word of God? is not in Acts 19, but the phrase ?kingdom of God? is in Acts 19:8 "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." Things concerning the kingdom of God certainly included the mysteries of the kingdom of God. This would be

consistent with the message that Paul boldly preached in every synagogue.

Acts Chapter 28 at Rome

The phrase "word of God" is not found in Acts 28 but the phrase, like in Acts 19, "kingdom of God," is found. Acts 28:30-31 "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31.

Preaching the kingdom of God. . . . "I am persuaded that Paul continues as his manner was in Acts 17:2 "And Paul, as his **manner** was, . . . reasoned with them out of the scriptures," but as a prisoner of Rome.

1 Peter 1:23

We find the phrase "word of God" mentioned in 1 Peter 1:23 "Being born again anagennaw only here and 1 Peter 1:3], not of corruptible **seed**, but of **incorruptible**, by **the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever." The incorruptible seed is the "word of God."

I believe that the incorruptible seed is the mysteries of the kingdom of God found in Luke 8:10-11 "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the **mysteries of the kingdom of God**: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11. Now the parable is this: The **seed** is the **word of God**

." The Greek word translated "born again" is only found here in 1 Peter 1:23 and in 1 Peter 1:3-5 "Blessed be the God and Father . . . which according to his abundant mercy hath **begotten us again** unto a **lively hope** by the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4. To an **inheritance** incorruptible . . . reserved in heaven for you, 5.

Who are kept [guarded] by the power of God (sufficient grace) through **faith**

." "Begotten us again" is the same word translated "born again" in verse 23. This new beginning is not the salvation found in John 3:3 which is based upon the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. This new beginning is based upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This new beginning is unto a living hope for an inheritance in the heavens. Hope of a heavenly inheritance is not a sure thing because faith is not a sure thing. We are kept or guarded by the power of God, which is his grace. Romans 5:2 "By whom (Jesus Christ our high priest) also we have **access by faith** into this **grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice **in hope of the glory of God**

." If we make shipwreck or depart from the faith, then the guarding power of God will be lost as well as the heavenly inheritance. This does not mean we will be removed from the family. Our birth into the family of God is based upon Christ death on the cross and not his resurrection.

Colossians 1:25-27

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the **dispensation** of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill **the word of God**; 26. *Even* the **mystery** which hath been **hid** from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27. To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" The "word of God" had been hidden for ages and from generation to generation but is **NOW** made **manifest** to his **saints** and not to the lost. The mysteries of the kingdom of God have been hidden until the Lord came and presented them to the nation of Israel. These mysteries were denied to Gentiles and Samaritans until Peter in Acts 8 and Acts 10 opened that door to them. Paul was a minister of the Word of God to Jews and then, with the new dispensation, to the Gentiles as well. A new dispensation began when Gentiles were included in the blessings of the kingdom of God. Paul refers to those blessings to the Gentiles in Ephesians 3:2-6 "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** ; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge 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 prophets 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:" Now Gentiles, that have ears to hear and eyes to see, can enter into a heavenly inheritance and not just Jews.

2 Corinthians 4:2

Paul made a commitment to "the word of God" in 2 Corinthians 4:2 "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling **the word of God**

deceitfully." When Paul went into the synagogue to present the word of God, he did it boldly and with great plainness of speech. When you are disputing with others you must be bold and Paul was bold when presenting the "word of God." Acts

18:26 "And he stood in the synagogue, and boldly preached for three months, disputing and persuading the things of the kingdom of God: who were all desiring to hear him: and when they had appointed him a sabbath school, he continued there daily, teaching the things of the kingdom of God, and giving witness unto the things which pertain unto Jesus Christ, saying, It is easy to enter into the kingdom of God."

and separated the disciples, **disputing** daily in the school of one Tyrannus."

TRADITION HINDERS THE WORD OF GOD

As it was in the days when the Lord and his disciples presented the mysteries of the kingdom of God, so it is today. The rulers of the Jews, who were Israel's teachers, taught against the "word of God." Mark 7:13 "Making **the word of God** of none effect through your tradition, . . ." Tradition teaches that when you are born from above you enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus did not teach that according to John 3:3 "Jesus . . . said unto him, . . . Except a man be born again, he cannot **see the kingdom** of God." Seeing the kingdom is not the same thing as entering into the kingdom. Moses saw the promised land but did not enter it. When one is born from above he becomes part of the family and is an heir of God. The kingdom of God is inherited so it is a family matter. Matthew 25:34 ". . . Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" You can lose that inheritance according to 1 Corinthians 6:9 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not **inherit the kingdom**

of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind," These and other sinful lifestyles will disqualify you from inheriting the kingdom of God.

There are those who teach the kingdom message is only for Israel. That is simply not the case at all. The nation of Israel as a whole rejected that message and that is when the door was opened to a nation that would produce the fruits required to enter into the kingdom of God. Matthew 21:43 "Therefore say I unto you (Israel), The **kingdom of God** shall be **taken** (salvation was not lost) **from** you (saved Israel), and given to a **nation** (saved Gentiles that would) **bringing forth** the fruits thereof."

There is one tradition that needs to be addressed briefly and that is the concept of "possessors and professors." If you don't produce the fruits thereof you were never saved and therefore a professor and not a possessor. This false doctrine is a tradition that hinders the word of God. Those who teach this heresy must be Armenian. When they believe on the Lord Jesus for salvation, they can never know for sure they were saved. They have to wait and see when they die if what they did will prove that they were a possessor. The concept of being a professor and not a possessor is a stronghold known as a high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. 2 Corinthians 10:5 "Casting down imaginations (strong hold), and every high thing (another strong hold) that **exalteth itself against the knowledge of God**

. . ." The teachers that teach this false doctrine want you to believe that if you fall in to such sins as strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, and envying, as found in Galatians 5, and you do not repent before you die, you will be cast into the lake of fire because you were never saved. These false teachers want you to believe that if you are saved you will not practice these sins that would exclude you from entering into the kingdom of the heavens.

Examples of those who did not repent of their sins before they died were Kings Solomon and Saul. Solomon was, at one time in his life, a man of prayer. God honored his prayer for wisdom by giving him more than wisdom. God blessed Solomon in the building of the Temple, yet he departed from the Lord because of his wives and died before he repented. Saul was anointed by God and prophesied with the prophets and then departed from following the Lord. We can see this in 1 Samuel 15:11 "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from **following** me, and hath not performed my commandments." Saul was not a professor but was a child of God that followed the Lord for a while then stopped. Just because you are saved does not mean that you cannot depart from the Lord.

PERSECUTION FOR THE WORD OF GOD

Paul suffered as an evildoer because he preached the word of God. 2 Timothy 2:9-10 "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, *even* unto bonds; but **the word of God is not bound**." It is uncanny how many in the church today oppose this doctrine. Suffering for the word of God is part of the spiritual warfare and opposition from those in the family make the warfare even more difficult. Satan knows how to use those in the family to hurt those who are seeking to grow in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The "word of God" is the sword of the spirit according to Ephesians 6:17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is **the word of God**:" "The word of God is a powerful weapon according to Hebrews 4:12 "For **the word of God** is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Satan has used, and will use, the threat of death to try to offend those who are embracing the message of the kingdom of God. Matthew 13:20-21 "But he that **received** the **seed** [he that was sown] into stony places, the same is he that **heareth** (present active) the **word** (the seed, the word of God), and anon with joy **receiveth** [present active] it; 21. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when **tribulation** or **persecution** ariseth because of the **word** (of God, the mysteries of the kingdom of God), by and by he is **offended**." This happened during Christ's ministry. The message of the kingdom of God will be preached during the tribulation period according to Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Those that preach this truth may suffer death according to Revelation 6:9 "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for **the word of God**, and for the testimony which they held:" This thought is repeated in Revelation 20:4 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were **beheaded** for the witness of Jesus, and **for the word of God**, . . . they lived and **reigned with Christ a thousand years**." It cost dearly to believe and preach the "word of God." There are those in the local church that vehemently oppose this truth today. Jesus told His disciples that they that kill you will think that they are doing God a service in John 16:2 "They shall put you (apostle) **out** of the **synagogues**: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever **killeth you will think that he doeth God service**." There are those in the body of Christ today that hate the Biblical definition of the **word of God** with such a passion that they are willing to scandalize them in the church. Rather than trying to help a brother see the error of his way, according to James 5:19-20 "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20.

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." they just kick the brother out of the church because helping him is not worth the time. I personally believe the reason they do not take the time is because they cannot refute the truth with their tradition. **Hebrews 13:7**

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you **the word of God**: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation." We are to remember them that have led us. We are to consider their life style and imitate it. Paul encouraged the church at Philippi to do this in Philippians 4:9 "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." In the same epistle Paul encourages them to imitate him. Philippians 3:17 "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

Paul was a church leader and a role model. Pastors and teachers who are teaching the "word of God" have a responsibility to live what is taught in that message. If the message of the mysteries of the kingdom of God does not change the lifestyle of the one who is teaching it, it will not change the lifestyle of those who listen. If we will listen diligently to that message our faith will increase. When faith increases so does the reality of the object of our faith, which is the surety or confidence of the things for which we hope.

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