



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 40
Issue 994

Highlights from the Book of Ephesians: The Revelation of the Church of the Mystery

by — Stanislas Van Mierlo (1888-1962)

Part 1 of 2

Key Points:

The "Church which is His Body" is distinctively blessed and positioned with Christ in a supreme heavenly realm known as the "Supercelestials." 8371
Believers are chosen in Christ before the throwing down of the world, revealing a purpose that transcends earthly matters and pertains to heavenly entities. 8373
Christ abolishes the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, rec-

onciling both to God, creating a unified, new entity, and establishing peace and equality among believers in the spiritual household of God..... 8376
Paul is divinely tasked to reveal the previously hidden mystery, which involves the Gentiles becoming joint-participants in the promises in Christ, signifying a new dispensation of grace..... 8378

EPHESIANS 1:3

... blessed us with all **spiritual blessings** in the Supercelestials in Christ.



which is His Body"³ (Ephesians 1:22-23) are said to have been placed in these *supremacy regions*.

"Spiritual blessings." These are opposed to the natural, earthly ones given to Israel.

"Supercelestials." This is the translation of *en tois epouranios*, i.e., "the Upper Heavenlies," occurs only in this epistle (Ephesians 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). All of these expressions are in the *dative* case,¹ which is about the place itself, in contrast to the following verses, where *epouranios* is also used, but the origin or character is pointed out by the use of the *genitive* case:² Matthew 18:35; John 3:12; I Corinthians 15:40, 48-49; Hebrews 3:1; 6:4; 8:5; 9:23; 11:16; 12:22.

It is indeed known that "heaven" (*ouranos*) is an expression that encompasses many things. Besides the atmosphere around the Earth, and the "expanse," this word also expresses the places where the spiritual beings are *located*. Revelation 8:13 *etc.* speaks of a "middle heaven" (Greek text), while the above-mentioned texts from Ephesians speak of the "Su-

(continued on page 8373)

3. [Editor:] For important information about the ecclesia of this current time, see:
– "The Body of Christ" or "The Church Which Is His Body"? A Compilation on the "One Body" of the Current Administration, on the [order form](#) under "Compilations."

No believers other than the members of "the Church

1. [Editor:] Noun: The category of nouns serving as the indirect object of a verb – TheFreeDictionary.com
2. [Editor:] Noun case used mainly to show possession. – Collins English Dictionary

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);

- union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Romans 6; Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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preme Heaven." The Lord Jesus is said to have "passed **through** the Heavens" (Hebrews 4:14, REB, YLT), that He ascended "**far above** all the Heavens" (Ephesians 4:10), and that He is now "**higher than** the Heavens" (Hebrews 7:26); that He is seated "**in Heaven far above** all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Ephesians 1:21), that now He sits at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1).

So, there is a part of the Heavens "above all" where "the Church which is His Body" is co-located in Christ. And there is another part, which is unclean by spiritual wickedness (Job 15:15; Ephesians 6:12). The Heavens must therefore also be cleansed (Hebrews 9:23).

EPHESIANS 1:4

... He has chosen us in Him before the **throwing down of the world** ...

"Throwing down of the world." This refers to Genesis 1:2.

When it comes to something on Earth, such as Israel and the Kingdom, one always finds "FROM the throwing down of the world" (Matthew 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Hebrews 4:3; 9:26; Revelation 13:8; 17:8). It then concerns the "council" of God (Acts 20:25-27) [which Paul faithfully proclaimed].

On the other hand, when it comes to the heavenly things, which includes Christ and "the Church which

is His Body," it is "BEFORE the throwing down of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). It concerns the "purpose" of God (Ephesians 3:11).

EPHESIANS 1:9

Having made known unto us **the Secret of His will** ...

A mystery is something that has not been made known, a secret. When a secret is made known it is no longer a mystery, at least to one who believes the revelation. Paul revealed several secrets.

EPHESIANS 1:18

*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in **the Heavenly Places, far above all** principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*

It takes enlightened eyes of understanding to know these great truths.



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EPHESIANS 1:22-23

And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

“The Church, which is His Body,” co-located in Him in the “Supreme Heaven,” has Him as Head, not as King. So, this church is in Him “above all.” He is now to “the Church, which is His Body,” what He will be to all later.

Israel and the Abrahamic believers will have dominion over the Earth, “the Church, which is His Body” over the “Supreme Heaven.” Here [in this current dispensation] the fuller name of the present Church is given: “the Church which is His Body.” This Church is the fulfillment (“fulness,” *plērōma*, Ephesians 1:23; 4:13) of Christ, and so can *already now* serve to make known to the rulers in Heaven “the manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10).

EPHESIANS 2:1

*Also you, being **dead to** your trespasses and sins.*

Likewise, see this in :5 and Colossians 2:13.

The word “in” (“**in** trespasses and sins”) is not used in Greek. The members of “the Church, which is His Body,” to whom the word is addressed here, were not only dead to sin (the root), but also to sins (the deeds); they are regarded as having put off not only the “old man” [“old humanity,” CV] but also its practices (Colossians 3:9, YLT).

EPHESIANS 2:5-6

We also being dead to sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the Supercelestials in Christ Jesus.

The members of “the Church, which is His Body” are made alive together, resurrected together, seated together in the “Supercelestials” in Christ (cf. Colossians 2:12 and 3:1). This passes all thought, and like our justification, is not by our merits, but obtained by grace, through faith. We are invited to see ourselves as God sees us, in the position He has placed us. This fellowship is not merely that of Romans 6:4-13, where believers are delivered from the power of sin, and must reckon themselves dead and buried, as to the old man. In that condition they could be regarded as priests, cleansed and washed (Hebrews 10:19-22). The present Church goes *much* further, and was never before seen.


EPHESIANS 2:8

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Members of “the Church, which is His Body” are saved by the grace of God. Both “grace” and “faith” are “gifts.” (For faith as a gift, see Philippians 1:29; Romans 12:3; I Corinthians 12:8-9). All boasting is then excluded (Ephesians 2:9).

EPHESIANS 2:11

Wherefore remember, that you being in time past Nations in the flesh, who are called Uncir-



The Church Which Is His Body, and The Bride the Lamb's Wife

We have reprinted a grand work on the subject of “the Body” in contrast to “the Bride” by the late J.H. Kessler.

“In Scripture the church of this dispensation is symbolized as ‘the Body of Christ,’ never as ‘the Bride.’” — Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*

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circumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.

"Nations ... *in the flesh*." In view of the flesh, of earthly things, until the end of Acts, there was a great difference between Israel and the nations. "*In the flesh*" Israel was God's people. However, now that all earthly things have fallen away for a time, there is no difference between the members of "*the Church, which is His Body*."

EPHESIANS 2:12-14

That at that time you were separated from Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

"Separated from Christ." The Nations had no fellowship with the Messiah as God's people had. Here emphasis is placed on the position of the Gentiles, even of the Gentile believers, until the end of the time of Acts. They are in sharp contrast to Israel. Although they partook of Israel's blessings (Romans 15:27), these were but crumbs that were given to dogs (Matthew 15:27).

The Gentile believers never had access to the part of the Temple that was not set up for them (*cf.* Acts 21:28; Lamentations 1:10). Until the end of the Acts

there thus remained a dividing wall between the believing Jews and the believers from the Gentiles, a wall which was also materially represented in the Temple. Now, however, this wall has been broken and all members of "*the Church which is His Body*" are on the same footing with God.

These verses here are not talking about salvation, but about the fact that the believers of the Nations, who were formerly saved in the "*flesh*" afar off, are now close. It is noted again that what characterizes the "*the Church which is His Body*" did not begin with Pentecost, but began after the end of the Acts (28:28). This drawing near, although grounded in the blood of Christ, did not begin immediately after the work at Calvary. For some 30 years Israel was still God's people and they were zealous of the law (Acts 21:20).

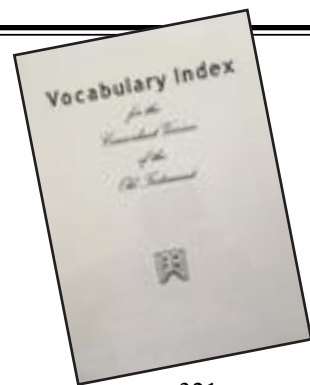
This current condition is temporary. After "*the Church which is His Body*," the previous state of Israel returns with Temple and sacrifices.

Our former position "*in the world*" (:12) is contrasted with "*in the Supercelestials*" (2:6).

EPHESIANS 2:15

Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two, one new man, so making peace.

Before Acts 28 the believing Jews still faithfully followed all of the ordinances. Now there are no more sacrifices, no more Temple, no more separation be-



321 pages

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Vocabulary Index for the Concordant Version of the Old Testament

This index is an attempt to provide users of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament access to full listings of the occurrences of each major Hebrew or Aramaic (Chaldee) word (except most proper names) used in the Old Testament. It is admittedly more complex and less convenient than the *Keyword Concordance* published with the New Testament, but until such a concordance using the vocabulary of the CVOT can be made available this may serve as a useful substitute. This is an abridgment of a full list of the English terms used in the CVOT. The list is keyed to *Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance* (5th edition).

tween a chosen people and other Nations. The “two” (Jews and Nations) are now CREATED into “one new man” in Christ.

“New” here, is the translation of *kainos*, something different from the former, of a different nature (e.g., Matthew 26:29, wine of a new and different nature; Mark 1:27, a new and different doctrine; Luke 22:20, a new and different covenant; II Corinthians 5:17, a new and different creature; II Peter 3:13, a new and different Heaven and Earth, etc.).

EPHESIANS 2:16

And that He might reconcile both unto God in One Body by the stake, having slain the enmity thereby.

“Reconcile” is the translation of *apokatallassō*, which occurs only here and in Colossians 1:20-21, and goes beyond *katallassō*, i.e., the conciliation as it existed before (Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 7:11; II Corinthians 5:18-20). Already now “the Church which is His Body” participates in that complete reconciliation.

EPHESIANS 2:19

Now therefore you are no more guests and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the Household of God.

The believers from the Nations are no longer in second place. They are now members of the Household of God and fellow-citizens with the saints (i.e., together-citizens of the “Supercelestials” of Ephesians 2:6).

Those formerly of the nations are not joined TO Is-

rael, for in the past even believing Israelites had no place in the “Supercelestials” (cf. Ephesians 3:6).

EPHESIANS 2:22

In Whom you also are built-together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

“Built-together” is *sunoikodomeō* and is nowhere else to be found in Scripture. For new things you need new words. Complete equality is expressed here.

EPHESIANS 3:2-9

If you have heard of the Dispensation of the Grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery ... Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, and of the joint-body, and joint-partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the Dispensation of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God ...

“Dispensation” is the translation of *oikonomia* which occurs also in Luke 16:2-4 (“stewardship”); I Corinthians 9:17 (“distribution”); Ephesians 1:10; 3:2; Co-

(see *EPHESIANS*, last page)

Daily Quick Quotes

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What Is Love as the Scriptures Define It?

Bible Student's Courses

Course 1: GOD / Unit 3: The Love of God / Lesson 3: What is Love as the Scriptures Define It?

by — Mark D. Vogt
(with Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)

God is love [agapē] (I John 4:8, 16).

Key Points:

Agapē is a word unique to the Scriptures. 8377
Agapē has as its object someone that is not worthy nor is able

to respond. 8378
We cannot earn or lose this love. 8378

To understand the topic of love, one needs to define what “love” is. This may seem a simple task, but as usual, it is more difficult than thought. By the definition of the word itself one can come to at least a partial understanding of the difference between the love that is God’s essence and the love that man demonstrates.

An example of *phileō* is found even in the basic camaraderie found among sports fans: a shared sense of belonging to that team is that which binds them. They root for the same team, wear the same clothing representing that team, sit in the stadium cheering on their team, and so forth.

We will consider just the New Testament treatment of this idea of love. There are two main Greek words that are translated into “love” in English. The first is *phileō* (a verb, along with *philos*, its adjective). The second is *agapē* (a noun, along with *agapaō*, its verb).

Agapē, on the other hand, is a word unique to the Scriptures themselves. It is unconditional, unconquerable, self-sacrificial, patient, forbearing, and ceaseless. Agapē is selfless, produced by supernatural empowerment, and therefore not humanly possible without divine enablement. Paul beautifully explores *agapē* in I Corinthians 13, by detailing its rich and wonderful qualities, as well as by noting its contrasts – the many things that it is not.

Phileō speaks of warm, friendly affection. It conveys fondness, liking, friendship, dearness, attachment. It arises between those having mutual interests (*i.e.*, family, community, business, pastimes, etc.). *Phileō* develops in growing relationships, requires mutual attention, is thus reciprocal in nature, and is conditional. *Phileō* is best translated as “fond,”¹ or “like,”² as some versions render it.

The Concordant Keyword Concordance defines *agapē* love as:

Phileō is what is felt for someone because they are a fellow human being. It is because of empathy for a person because they are “one of us,” or because of shared humanity, or some mutual experience.

A complex emotion arousing appreciation or delight in and desire for the pleasure of its object, as well as to please and promote its welfare; to be distinguished from affection, fondness [*phileō*], which is aroused by the qualities of its object, while love may go out to the utterly unworthy ...

1. Concordant Version, Murdock Literal Translation, Wuest Expanded Translation.
2. Moffatt, Goodspeed, God's Word Translation, Twentieth Century NT, Jonathan Mitchell NT.

Agapē was a unique word to Scripture because it's Who God is. It is His very nature, His very definition.

God is love [agapē] (I John 4:8, 16).

Thus, *agapē* far exceeds *phileō* in that it has as its object someone that is not required to be worthy, nor to reciprocate that love. In other words, it is a love that is not based on whether or not one is “lovable,” or whether or not one responds in kind.

Agapē is the love that God has for His Son Christ Jesus (John 17:26), and what in turn Christ has for the church, which is His Body (Ephesians 5:25). God loved us before we were born, or before we had sinned (Ephesians 1:1-12).

We can do nothing to earn this love, and we certainly cannot do anything to lose it. It is the strongest and most passionate love that can be manifested.

Some of the best 20 examples of the definitive usage of these Greek words (*agapē/agapaō*) are found in Ephesians. It is interesting to note that this great letter is the one that also introduces us to the glorious revelation of the Secret Administration. In this letter God reveals His unmatched love towards the church which is His body (*agapē* is used 10 times: Ephesians 1:4, 15; 2:4; 3:17, 19; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2; 6:23; *agapaō* is used 10 times: Ephesians 1:6; 2:4; 5:2, 25 (x2), 28 (x3), 33; 6:24). **BSN**

Note: For a bit closer look at this contrasting theme, see, “*Phileō* and *Agapē*: Fondness and Love,” *Bible Student’s Notebook* 990.

TOPICS:

Major: *Agapē*; God, Love of; Love; *Phileō*
Minor: Ecclesia

EPHESIANS (continued from page 8376)

lossians 1:25. As Peter had the “*stewardship*” of the Kingdom on Earth (Matthews 16:19), Paul, and he alone, has that of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:2). Apart from these last epistles of Paul we should not look for this hidden dispensation.

The mystery involves Israel (of the past) now grouped among the nations, and “*the Church which is His Body*” being “*joined together*” in a threefold way: joint-heirs, joint-body, joint-partakers (3:6; 4:16; cf. Colossians 3:11).

Sussōmos, the Greek word for “*joint-body*,” is used nowhere else in Scripture, and characterizes the nature of “*the Church which is His Body*.” This is completely different from the nations on the “*tree*” of Israel (Romans 11).

— *The Purpose of the Ages*
(edited excerpt)

(continued next issue)

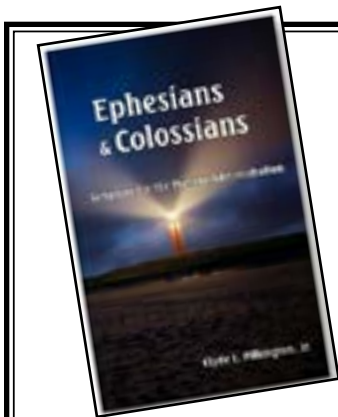
Stanislas Van Mierlo (1888-1962), born in Antwerp, Belgium was a student of E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), an associate of A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) and Charles H. Welch (1880-1967), and co-editor along with G.J. Pauptit (1889-1962) of the Dutch monthly periodical *Uit de Schriften* (*Out of the Scriptures*, 1920-1960), as well the author of several books, including *The Divine Plan and its Realization*, and co-author of *About the Mystery: Some Brief Explanations of the Great Mystery Revealed to the Apostle Paul*.

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- *Did Christ Die in Our Place?* [BSN 938](#);
- *Characteristics of the Church of the Mystery (and those Believers Outside of the Church of the Mystery)*, [BSN 947](#);
- *Some Dispensational Differences*, [BSN 948](#).

TOPICS:

Major: Ecclesia; Ephesians; Mystery
Minor: Acts 28:28; Right Division



Ephesians & Colossians *Scripture for the Present Administration*

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Ephesians and Colossians are the present truth for the current dispensation. Ephesians introduces the Secret Administration in which we live, while Colossians, its companion epistle, completes the Word of God. There are no other Secret Administration letters beyond Ephesians and Colossians.

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