

We pause in this miniseries about the Lord's "second coming" to recap our findings thus far. Our purpose is to clarify the hope before us today in this present dispensation of the grace of God but to make this clear we had to expose some false traditions. These ingrained errors are serious impediments in our efforts to understand this hope.

The first major hurdle to overcome was the tradition that the Gospels and Acts period were the beginning of something new, namely our present "church" age.

We found the following verses written during the Acts period disallow such a tradition for they all speak of the "ends of the ages" or the nearness of the end. The first speaks of the timing of our Lord's redemptive ministry. The second group shows what Paul thought when he wrote during the Acts period. The third group confirm the consistent teaching that the nearness of the Lord's return to the earth in power and glory was in view at that time;

[Heb 9:26](#) but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (RV)

[1Co 10:11](#) .. they were written for our instruction, to whom the ends of the ages have come. (EMTV).

[1Co 7:29](#) But this I say, brothers, The time is short. ...

[1Co 7:31](#) .. the world in its present form is passing away.

[Heb 10:37](#) For "in a very little while the one who is coming will return and will not delay; (ISV).

[1Jo 2:18](#) .., it is the last hour. .. an antichrist is coming, .. many antichrists have appeared. .. we know it is the last hour. (ISV).

[Jam 5:8](#) .. the coming of your Lord draws near.

[1Pe 4:7](#) But the end of all things has drawn near..

The Gospels and Acts were not the beginning of anything. The believers were waiting for the Lord out of heaven to reign over the world from the throne of His Father David in Jerusalem. This is the hope of Acts from the beginning to the end.

We examined the gospels of Peter and Paul and found this common Kingdom on the earth theme. Here is the hope of Peter in Acts 2;

[Act 2:30](#) knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him (David) that of *the* fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne,

[Act 2:31](#) seeing this beforehand, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ (Psalm 16)

Peter tells his listeners that the Savior was resurrected to sit on the throne of His Father David. This was the hope of the Acts period. Peter also proclaims forgiveness of sins in the One crucified, see Acts 2:38, 4:12, 10:43 and Acts 15:7-11.

We then examined Paul and found him teaching this exact same hope; the promise made to the fathers;

[Act 13:23](#) Of this *man's* seed (David) God has raised to Israel, according to *His* promise, a Savior, Jesus;

[Act 13:32](#) And we preach the gospel to you, the promise made to the fathers,

[Act 13:33](#) this God has fulfilled to us their children, raising up Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son, this day I have begotten You." (Psalm 2 is Christ on the Holy Hill of Zion)

Both Peter and Paul proclaimed that the Lord was raised to sit on David's throne and it is important for the reader to examine each O.T. reference they use to see this hope. Paul also proclaimed forgiveness of sins and righteousness by faith through grace (Acts 13:38-39) but the future place for all Acts period believers was the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth. Notice the "promise of the fathers" is Paul's consistent theme during Acts. There is no progression or transition from the great O.T. hope of the Kingdom on the earth in Paul at any time during Acts;

[Act 13:32](#) And we preach the gospel to you, the promise made to the fathers, (he then refers to Psalm 2, Is.55, Ps.16, Hab.1 and Is.49)

[Act 26:6](#) And now I stand and am judged for *the* hope of the promise made to our fathers by God,

[Rom 15:4](#) For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, so that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (this is not the hope of the church which is His Body revealed later).

[Rom 15:8](#) And I say, Jesus Christ has become a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,

It defies all plainness of Scripture to think that the glorious hope of Ephesians and Colossians which is part of a dispensation hidden in God and away from ages and generations, revealed after Israel was put aside at Acts 28, can be found in the "promises made to the fathers".

In Romans 15:4-13, a great passage about the hope of the Acts period, Paul quotes Ps.18, the "song of Moses" in Deut.

32, Ps.117 and finally the great millennial passage of Isaiah 11.

Rom 15:12 And again Isaiah says, "There shall be a root of Jesse, and He who shall rise to reign over the nations, in Him shall the nations trust."

Isa 11:6 Also the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the cub lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Isa 11:7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isa 11:8 And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

Isa 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

We must not read "all My holy mountain" and "the earth" of Isaiah in Romans and imagine "heaven".

We examined 1 Thess.4 and discovered that there is not one word or phrase which hinted that anyone, including the Lord, was going back into heaven. The phrase "ever be with the Lord" applies equally to believers destined for the earth.

1Thess.4 was the coming Kingdom for Israel established when the Lord returned to the earth. The believers of that time were to go up to the clouds in the air, to "meet" the Lord as He descended just as Moses went up to meet the Lord when He descended to the earth in Israel's typical redemption. The believers of that time were going to judge the world and angels (1Cor.6:2-3) on the earth;

1Th 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall ever be with the Lord.

The last trumpet of Revelation 11 is the same trumpet of Matt.24, 1Cor.15 and 1Thess.4. The Feast of Trumpets is the first of the last group of Feasts the Lord gave to Israel. The Feast of Trumpets was foreshadowed when Joshua led Israel into their inheritance and the walls of Jericho fell down at the last of seven Trumpets. At the last Trumpet the Lord Christ will take His authority in the world as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Israel's Feasts do not outline any hope for the Church which is His Body. At Trumpets the Lord returns to the earth and sets up Israel's Kingdom and the believing Gentiles of the Acts period were to be resurrected or changed to be blessed with faithful Abraham.

Paul's final words in the Acts period were to assure the believing Jews and Gentiles that this hope was before them and imminent. After quoting the millennial Isaiah passage above, Paul comforts the Christians of that time with these words;

Rom 15:13 And may the God of (that) hope (of the Old Testament) fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (That is the supernatural gifts which were powers of that coming Millennial Kingdom).

Rom 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

During Acts this hope was proclaimed to the Jew first and Gentiles were brought in to provoke Israel to jealousy. Please see Acts 3:26, 13:46, and Romans 1:16, and 11:1-2, Having stated clearly that Israel were not cast aside, Paul then states the purpose of the Gentiles being included during the Acts period:

Rom 11:11 And so I ask, "They have not stumbled so as to fall, have they?" Of course not! On the contrary, because of their stumbling, salvation has come to the gentiles to make the Jews jealous. (ISV)

We are not saved today to make Israel jealous nor are we expecting the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth, the great millennial reign of Christ on the throne of His Father David. These were the dispensational settings of the Acts period and included were the supernatural signs and wonders which were powers of that great millennial age to come (Hebs. 6:4-5);

1Co 1:7-8 so that you come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He shall also confirm you to the end, Rom 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ did not work out by me for the obedience of the nations in word and deed,

Rom 15:19 in power of miracles and wonders, in power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and all around to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

All these dispensational things belong to the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth, and were in evidence right up to the last chapter of Acts. Paul's apostolic powers were seen in Acts 28:3-9, and the hope of Israel which was the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth was still Paul's expectation, Acts 28:20, 23.

The Acts period was a further offer of salvation to Israel; it was not the beginning of our present "church" age. For 40 years this is what God was doing:

Rom 10:21 But to Israel He says, "All day long I have stretched forth My hands to a disobeying and gainsaying people."

But why didn't these things take place back then? This Kingdom on the earth was conditional upon Israel's repentance as Acts 3:17-21 shows. All through the book of Acts the message went to the Jews but nationally they refused to accept Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah and after 40 years of opportunity, the Lord God put Israel and His purposes for the earth through them, to one side.

When Israel was put aside, all these elements and the great hope of the Kingdom on the Earth were put aside with them.

Here is the setting aside of Israel:

Act 28:23 And they (chief of the Jews) having appointed him a day, many came to him in *his* lodging; to whom he expounded, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them the things concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, from morning until evening.

Act 28:24 And some indeed believed the things that were said, others did not believe.

Act 28:25 And disagreeing with one another, they were let go,

Paul saying one word: Well did the Holy Spirit speak through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers,

Act 28:26 saying, "Go to this people and say: Hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and not perceive.

Act 28:27 For the heart of this people was fattened, and they have heard with their ears dully; and they closed their eyes; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Act 28:28 Therefore be it known to you that the salvation of God is sent to the nations, and they will hear.

Our Apostle Paul was in prison when Israel was nationally set aside and his prison ministry changed after this pronouncement of the judgment prophecy of Isaiah.

God's character does not change, but our Heavenly Father changes His administrations according to His purposes and plans. In our next lesson we begin the exciting Scriptural journey of discovering the wonderful change of hope which was introduced with the revelation of The Mystery, the present dispensation of the grace of God.