

There can be no doubt that one of the most blinding traditions the enemy has spread across the eyes of Christianity is the one which says the Gospels and Acts were the beginning of the "church" era.

Regrettably the majority believe that Israel was put aside at either the cross, Acts 2 (Pentecost), Acts 9 or 13 and the "church" began. These errors have compounded the problems within the widely divided Christian community.

Last lesson we looked at just a few Scriptures which plainly state that during the book of Acts the ends of the ages were in view, not some new beginning and the faithful believers of that time were expecting to live through to the specific glory that was to follow; the ends of the ages and the coming in of the Kingdom age at Trumpets.

So what happened and when did it happen? What was it that brought about a change in the time status from the ends of the ages to the beginnings of the present administration or set of conditions in which we live today?

To answer this question it will help us to know exactly what the glory was that was expected during the gospels and Acts period.

When John the Baptist appeared he proclaimed the following message to Israel:

[Mat 3:1](#) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

[Mat 3:2](#) and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

[Mat 3:3](#) For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

We notice first of all that John proclaimed the "kingdom of heaven". This kingdom proclaimed by John originating out of heaven, we must not read in his message any kingdom in heaven. Notice this Kingdom had drawn near. Also notice the link between the kingdom of heaven and the words "prepare the way of the Lord" written in Isaiah 40.

The reader should read all of Isaiah 40 where the words of the prophet give us understanding as to what that Kingdom on the earth, with its origins in and by heaven meant to John's listeners:

[Isa 40:1](#) Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

[Isa 40:2](#) Speak lovingly to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is done, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.

[Isa 40:4](#) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall be made level, and the rough places smooth;

[Isa 40:5](#) and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken.

[Isa 40:10](#) Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

[Isa 40:11](#) He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those with young.

[Isa 40:22](#) It is He who sits on the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in;

[Isa 40:23](#) who brings the rulers to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth as vanity.

[Isa 40:24](#) Yes, they shall not be planted; yes, they shall not be sown. Yes, their stump shall not take root in the earth. And He shall also blow on them, and they shall wither, and the tempest shall take them away like stubble.

Isaiah 40 is a prophecy about the glory of Israel under their Messiah. It has nothing to do with us today. It is about the Lord who is more powerful than all the nations of the earth and it speaks of the geophysical changes that will take place when the Lord comes to His people Israel "and feeds His flock like a shepherd, (and) .. gather the lambs with His arm," please compare Ez.34. Isaiah 40 is Israel's regathering and blessing under our Lord's rule out of Zion. The reader might like to read all of Psalm 72 and 89;

[Psa 89:35](#) Once I have sworn by My holiness that I will not lie to David.

[Psa 89:36](#) His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me.

[Psa 89:37](#) It shall be established forever like the moon, and like a faithful witness in the heavens. Selah.

We remember the angel's words to Mary at our Saviour's birth:

[Luk 1:31](#) And behold! You shall conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name JESUS.

[Luk 1:32](#) He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David.

[Luk 1:33](#) And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

His reign over the house of Jacob forever is the Kingdom of Heaven, which is out of, or originating from heaven. Neither the Lord nor His Kingdom on the earth were “of this world”, see John 8:23, 18:36 and Psalm 89:29. This reign of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords was the expectation of the gospels and Acts period. This was the glory that was expected at the ends of the ages.

Our Saviour spoke clearly of His reign on the earth and His coming in great glory with all the holy angels to rule righteously;

[Mat 24:29](#) And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

[Mat 24:30](#) And then the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory.

[Mat 24:31](#) And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

And again here:

[Mat 25:31](#) But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He shall sit on the throne of His glory.

[Mat 25:32](#) And all nations shall be gathered before Him. And He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

The reader might like to read Joel 3 and Zeph.3.

And again here:

[Mat 26:63](#) But Jesus was silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, I adjure you by the living God that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God.

[Mat 26:64](#) Jesus said to him, You said it. I tell you more. From this time you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of the heavens.

He made a great promise to the twelve that in the days of the Kingdom of Heaven they would sit upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel, see Matt.19:23-30.

When our Lord was asked by His enemies when the Kingdom of God would come, He answered;

[Luk 17:20](#) And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation.

[Luk 17:21](#) Nor shall they say, Lo here! or, behold, there! For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.

He told them the Kingdom of God did not come because they observed the law and tithed mint and cumin (Matt.23:23). He plainly told them the Kingdom of God was in their midst. He was the King of the Jews standing among them. Accept Him and the Kingdom of God would come. He had clearly proclaimed His Messiahship to Israel by those powerful credentials which the prophets said he would show (Acts 2:22 and Isaiah 35) but of course, these and the call for their repentance, they refused.

All Israel knew of this Kingdom of Heaven on the earth which was clearly spoken about in the Old Testament and was pictured in the wonderful typical redemption of Israel.

After our Lord's death burial and resurrection He spoke to the two on the road to Emmaus who had hoped that Jesus of Nazareth was about to redeem Israel (Lk.24:21). The Saviour, Israel's King, did not deny this redemption of Israel, the hope they held dear, on the contrary, He assured them all that the prophets had spoken about would be fulfilled. This included the coming in of the Kingdom;

[Luk 24:25](#) And He said to them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all things that the prophets spoke!

[Luk 24:26](#) Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?

[Luk 24:27](#) And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

[Luk 24:44](#) And He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms about Me.

[Luk 24:45](#) And He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures.

The disciples did not understand concerning the sufferings before the glory. They had certainly understood the coming glory. They understood when the Lord proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven had drawn near, Matt.4:17, but when He spoke about the suffering He would endure they were confused. This aspect of Our Lord's ministry was hidden from the disciples. They did not understand about His crucifixion, death burial and resurrection see Lk.9:45 and 18:31-34 then consider 1Cor.2:6-9.

The Kingdom of Heaven is one of righteousness. Firstly, sin and sins had to be dealt with according to all the types, shadows and prophecies of the Old Testament. Before Israel was brought into their Land they were redeemed by the blood of the Passover Lamb. As the Lord said, “all things that the prophets spoke” had to be fulfilled. We remember Moses wrote in the beginning of the Scriptures that Adam and

Eve were covered with coats of skin made from the animal which died in their stead. See Genesis 3 and 4. Abraham was offering up his only son, the son he loved and Paul refers to the Passover sacrifice in 1 Cor.5 and the "firstfruits" of Lev. 23 in 1 Cor. 15.

Once the disciples had their minds opened to understand the Scriptures regarding all the wonders of the Lord's suffering, then they were full of joy knowing that the glory to follow the sufferings was now ready to arrive. Is it any wonder they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, Lk.24:51-53.

On the Day of Pentecost, with his mind opened to understand the Scriptures, and after 40 days instruction by the risen Lord, this is what Peter proclaimed to Israel;

Act 2:22 Men, Israelites, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by powerful works, and wonders and miracles, which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know,

Act 2:23 this One given to you by the before-determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by lawless hands, crucifying Him, you put Him to death;

Act 2:24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Act 2:25 For David speaks concerning Him, "I foresaw the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, that I should not be moved.

Act 2:26 Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad; and also My flesh shall rest in hope,

Act 2:27 because You will not leave My soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your holy One to see corruption.

Act 2:28 You revealed to Me the ways of life. You will fill Me with joy with Your countenance."

Act 2:29 Men, brothers, it is permitted to say to you with plainness as to the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him 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, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor would His flesh see corruption,

Act 2:32 God raised up this Jesus, of which we all are witnesses.

Act 2:33 Therefore being exalted to the right of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which you now see and hear.

Act 2:34 For David has not ascended into the heavens, but he says himself, "The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand

Act 2:35 until I place Your enemies as a footstool to Your feet."

Act 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God made this same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Peter pointed the Israelites to the great Kingdom of Heaven the prophets spoke about. Jesus of Nazareth had been raised to sit upon David's throne on the earth, ruling Israel and the nations.

Israel had rejected their Messiah during the Gospels but what would Israel do given this further opportunity to accept their King as Saviour and Restorer? How would they respond to the wonderful message of this soon coming Kingdom and the forgiveness of sins and righteousness that was to be found in the One who would bring in that Kingdom to and for them?

The Kingdom of Heaven which had drawn near in the gospels was still near and on offer right through the book of Acts until the last chapter. For about 40 years God held out His hands to a disobedient and contradicting nation of Israel. At the end of the book of Acts God put Israel aside for a season and introduced the present administration through the Apostle Paul. The ends of the ages were only postponed at the end of Acts and are now future to us today.

Next lesson we shall go further into the book of Acts and see the witness of Paul and his clear gospel during that time. We shall see Paul, like his risen Lord, referring to all that the prophets had spoken. This included the sufferings of the Lord for sin and sins and righteousness and the Lord's resurrection to sit upon David's throne.

This reign of Christ which begins at the fulfilment of the Feast of Trumpets was the hope held during the Acts period and which was expected in their lifetimes. The kingdom of heaven as proclaimed by Paul during Acts can be found in Isaiah 11, 28, 40 and 55 which passages the interested reader might like to read prior to the next edition.