

This lesson is a general overview of the dispensational setting which was in place both in Moses and Deuteronomy and in Paul and Romans written during the Acts period. We will also compare Peter and Paul in regard to the Lord's faithfulness and longsuffering grace towards Israel during Acts.

Let us turn back to Israel's past and review the faithfulness of God in action. After Israel was delivered out of Egypt by the Passover, they failed in faith at Kadesh-barnea when God told them to go up and possess the Promised Land, see Deut.1; 21 & 26. God turned them back to walk in the wilderness for 40 probationary years of learning and correction during which time He remained faithful to them despite their rebellious attitude, see Deut.4:31-35. Their journeys were accompanied by supernatural signs and wonders of provision and judgment, see Deut.8:2-4. At the end of this period of testing the words and events of Deuteronomy took place and then Joshua led Israel into their inheritance at typical Trumpets. Despite Israel's failure of faith, their Lord God was longsuffering and took them into the Land according to His promise, not according to their self righteousness. God did not start anything new simply because Israel was blind and deaf to His message.

When God gave Moses the Law on tables of stone the second time as recorded in Ex.34:1-11, He proclaimed His name and included the virtues accompanying His name. One of His characteristics is "longsuffering" and it is very relevant to note that this second tables of the Law was after Israel had rebelled with the golden calf. Twice God gave Israel the Law a second time. The second tables of stone and Deuteronomy was the second giving of the Law. Please consider Acts in this typology. This is strong evidence that God did not change His purposes because of Israel's failures;

And Jehovah came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And Jehovah passed by before him and proclaimed, **Jehovah! Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth**, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and who will by no means clear *the guilty*, (or acquitting him who is not innocent) visiting the iniquity of fathers on the sons, and on the sons of sons, to the third and to the fourth generation.

And Moses made haste and bowed toward the earth, and worshiped. And he said, If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Jehovah, I pray You, **let my Lord go among us. For it is a stiff-necked people. And pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Your inheritance.**

And He said, Behold! I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. And all the people in whose midst you *are* shall see the work of Jehovah, for it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you. [Exo 34:5-10](#)

This Old Testament typology in Israel's history anticipates the dispensational setting of the Gospels and Acts. The Acts is yet another period of probationary opportunity for Israel to learn and respond to the grace of God. For the second time the Lord is presented to them. Mighty signs and wonders confirmed the message and Stephen speaks of God's faithfulness to His unfaithful people in Acts 7:36-45. Years later Paul writes in Romans that despite Israel, God was faithful to them had not cast them aside;

But to Israel He says, "All day long I have stretched forth My hands to a disobeying and gainsaying people." I say then, Did not God put away His people? Let it not be *said!* ...God did not thrust out His people whom He foreknew. ...., [Rom 10:21-11:2](#)

For those who love deeper study, please read Isaiah 65:1-9 verse 2 of which Paul quotes in Romans 10:21. Isaiah and Paul both speak of the remnant that will enter the kingdom, compare

Is.65 and Roms.9:23-29 and 11:5-6. The inclusion of Elijah by Paul is dispensationally significant, in his time Israel was unfaithful but God remained faithful to them and a remnant was reserved.

Despite Israel's unfaithfulness in the Exodus, their God took them into the Land because of His promise to their fathers and the hope of the Acts period is summed up in Romans 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, Rom 15:8. Compare Acts 13:32, 26:6-7, Gal.3:17-18, 28-29 and 4:26-28.

Like Deuteronomy, Romans was written late in the extended opportunity of grace period for Israel. In Romans Paul writes that "the night is far spent, the Day is at hand" 13:11-13. He exhorts his readers to walk as if they were living in THE DAY. And when would that Day begin? In both Corinthians and Thessalonians he writes of the Feast of Trumpets as being imminent at which event the true Joshua would re-gather Israel into the Promised Land and the day of glory would begin for them. It would also be the day when "the vessels of wrath" and the rebellious would perish as Paul warned in his gospel of Acts 13:40-41.

We have seen in Moses that the Lord proclaimed His Name and His gracious longsuffering for His stiff-necked people and it is this feature I want to emphasize.

The original NT word "makrothumia" translated "longsuffering" first occurs in Paul's Acts period letter to the Romans. The verbal form is found in Luke 18:6-8 which also features the coming of the Lord. I want to show the theme of Romans in which we find the Lord's longsuffering towards Israel. Here is the first occurrence of makrothumia translated longsuffering which longsuffering provided space for Israel to repent;

And, O man, the *one* judging those who do such things, and practice them, do you think this, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness, and the forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you (JEWS) to repentance? Rom 2:3-4 (note v17).

Immediately following this statement concerning God's longsuffering for the Jews, Paul confirms God's faithfulness and their superior position dispensationally;

Then what *is* the superiority of the Jew? Or what *is* the profit of circumcision? Much, by every way! Chiefly, indeed, because they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

For what? If some (JEWS) did not believe, will not their unbelief nullify the faith of God? Let it not be! Rom 3:1-4a

Regarding Israel in Romans, Paul states that God was longsuffering to lead them to repentance and His longsuffering stood because He remained faithful to them despite their unfaithfulness to Him. Paul resumes this theme in chapter 9 where he reaffirms that "the Word of God has not failed" in the matter of Israel. The election of Israel through Isaac and the sub elections of honor and wrath are both a testimony to God's purposes for the nation and an explanation of the situation during Acts;

Not however that the Word of God has failed, for not all those of Israel are Israel; nor because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. But, "In Isaac shall your Seed be called." Rom 9:6-7. See also, 9:10-13.

For He said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." So then *it is* not of the *one* willing, nor of the *one* running, but of God, the *One* showing mercy. Rom 9:15-16 and compare Roms.11:28-32

What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had before prepared to glory; Rom 9:22-23

I appreciate that these things regarding God's election in the matter of Abraham's seed are difficult to understand though we do understand them. These things are associated with God's twofold longsuffering. He was patient in order that the Jews might come to repentance and thus be saved and secondly, He was enduring the vessels of wrath. It is important that we can accept the fact that Paul, from Romans 2-3:4, and then from 9 through 11 is writing of God's longsuffering heart for His people who remained but nationally remained unfaithful. Please read Roms.3:1-4a again.

The truths expressed in Romans 3:1-4a are confirmed and consummated in Paul's glorious conclusion of the matter here;

And so all Israel shall be saved; ...Indeed as regards the gospel, *they are enemies...* But as regards the election, *they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.* For the free gifts and calling of God *are without repentance.* Rom 11:26-29

The apostle Peter also wrote about God's longsuffering towards Israel and he uses, in 2Pet.3:10, the identical original word Paul used in Roms.2:4 and 9:22. Notice Peter also affirms the coming of the Lord as the hope;

.. **in the last days** scoffers .. saying, Where is the promise of **His coming**? 2Pe 3:3-4

The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness, but is **long-suffering** toward us (Israelites), not purposing that any (**of us JEWS**) should perish, but that all (**Jews**) should come to repentance. 2Pe 3:9.

This is so important I need to interrupt Peter and post Paul's words in Romans again;

And, O man, the *one* judging those who do such things, and practice them, do you think this, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness, and the forbearance and **long-suffering**, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you (JEWS) to repentance? Rom 2:3-4 (note v17).

Can we all see that Peter and Paul are on the same page in the matter of God's patience with Israel? He is longsuffering towards Israel because He waits for their repentance, not willing that any should perish. Let us return to Peter who writes to contradict the scoffers;

**But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night**, (cp 1Thess.5:2) ..... 2Pe 3:9-10

Therefore, .. looking for these things, ... And think of **the long-suffering of our Lord as salvation** (FOR ISRAEL) (as our beloved brother **Paul also has written to you** (dispersed Israelites) according to the wisdom given to him 2Pe 3:14-15.

Peter says Paul had "written to you" (JEWS) regarding the longsuffering of the Lord as a gracious opportunity for repentance and salvation for Israel, not the church which is His Body. Peter is writing to dispersed Israel (1Pet.1:1 and Gal.2:7). Now some will try and affirm that Paul did not write to the dispersed Jews but Peter clearly says he did. Paul had not seen Rome when he wrote to them but there were Roman Jews at the Feast of Pentecost as seen in Acts 2:10.

Returning to the second of Peter we read this passage which is often confused and perverted today;

as also in all his letters, **speaking in them of these things**; in which are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable pervert, as also *they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction*). 2Pe 3:16

The "things hard to be understood" do not include the glorious gospel of justification by faith; they are the things of the Lord's longsuffering love for Israel with the certainty of His coming. Peter wrote of the salvation and the grace of God in 1Pet.1:10-12. In 2Pet.3 he writes of the

understanding given to Paul in the matter of the Lord's longsuffering towards His rebellious people; these are the things which the unlearned and unstable pervert. Peter starts this section with mockers and ends it with the unlearned and unstable both groups casting doubt on the grace of God for Israel.

This longsuffering of the Lord is the theme in Peter and in Romans. Despite what seemed to be a delay in the Lord's return, the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets was imminent, compare Roms.13:11-13 and 1Pet.4:7.

My dear readers, are we beginning to see the true nature and purposes of the Acts period? We cannot imagine a God who, while proclaiming His faithfulness to the nation of Israel, was at the same time quietly disclosing through Paul a new dispensation where the promises He made to the fathers would be put aside. Could your God inspire Paul to write that His "gifts and calling were without change of mind" and that Israel were loved for the Father's while at the same time He was putting them aside? Israel had stumbled at the stumbling stone but they were not cast aside. The later truths of Ephesians had not been revealed, and Israel remained God's people and channel when Paul wrote Romans and Peter wrote his letters.

Back in Moses the Lord spoke of His longsuffering kindness towards a stiff-necked people. He took them into the Promised Land regardless of their rebellious attitude. Peter and Paul write during Acts of the same faithfulness of God to the same people. In Romans Paul writes that the Lord was longsuffering and kind to Israel which was designed to lead them to repentance in a time when the night was far spent and the Day was at hand. Peter wrote the same thing nearly word for word; the Lord was longsuffering not willing that any (Israelites) should perish but the Day of the Lord would come and it was "near".

The Acts was not the beginning of anything new, but a glorious testimony of the grace of God towards His people Israel and His faithfulness to those promises He had made to their fathers.