

The Letters of Paul.

Today let us consider the letters of Paul and I believe this includes Hebrews making a total of fourteen (14). Many have tried to date these letters but really, the most important thing for us is their content; when and what is Paul writing about.

It is wise for us to remember that Paul tells us we must distinguish things that differ and rightly divide the Word of Truth (Phils.1:9-10 & 2Tim.2:15). If we ignore these Bible study rules we will be ashamed and unapproved. These rules must be applied to Paul's writings as being the words of truth.

There are teachings in our Apostle which do not change and can be found in all his writings such as, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and we should all strive to run the race with patience. See 1Cor.15:3-4, Gal.1:3-4, Eph.1:7, Heb.10:4, 12, Acts 13:39 & Titus 3:7. But there are some blatant differences in our Apostle's letters and these we should note very carefully.

During the period covered by the book of Acts Paul was proclaiming our Lord Christ Jesus as the One in whom forgiveness of sins and righteousness could be found but at the same time he was presenting the Lord as Israel's coming Messiah. The soon coming Kingdom on the earth was the expectation before believers at that time. Let us consider the book of Romans as an example.

It is widely acknowledged that the book of Romans was written late in the Acts period (about Acts 20) and in that book we notice these differences. The reader might like to consider the wonderfully fundamental passages of Romans 1:16-17 and 3:1-2, 9-23, then compare the hope of the Acts period as found in Romans 15:4-13. This passage includes the destruction of Israel's enemies and the reign of Christ out of Jerusalem as found in Deut.32, Psalm 18 and Isaiah 11. We are as assuredly forgiven and made righteous in Christ today as were the believers of the Acts period but we are certainly not looking for the Kingdom of God on the earth today as they were during that time.

If Romans was written at about the time of Acts 20, then we note carefully Paul's word spoken after the writing of that book in Acts 26

[Act 26:15](#) And I said, Who are you, lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom you persecute.

[Act 26:16](#) But rise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of what you saw, and in what I shall appear to you;

[Act 26:17](#) delivering you from the people and the nations, to whom I now send you

[Act 26:18](#) in order to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the authority of Satan to God, so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.

[Act 26:19](#) After this, king Agrippa, I did not disobey the heavenly vision.

[Act 26:22](#) Then having obtained help from God, I stand until this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said was going to happen;

[Act 26:23](#) whether the Christ was liable to suffer, whether first by a resurrection of the dead He was going to proclaim light to the people and to the nations.

Please consider these passages also; Acts 24:14, 25:8, 26: 6-7,27-28, 28:17, 20, 23.

In the preceding passages Paul gives clear testimony about his ministry during the Acts period and Paul clearly says Israel was not put aside at the cross or Pentecost as is popularly believed (see Romans 11:1-2).

Paul's testimony in the Acts period was not offensive to the nation of Israel. Paul worshipped the God of his fathers believing all things written in the Law and in the Prophets. Paul declares that the 12 tribes were waiting for the hope of the promise made to their Fathers which is the Kingdom on the earth. Paul tells us that his preaching only included that which the Law and the Prophets said was going to happen. The following letters are perfectly in harmony with these claims;

[Galatians](#), [1@2Corinthians](#), [1@2 Thessalonians](#), [Hebrews](#) and [Romans](#).

These letters are full of the Acts period teachings of Paul and were written before Israel was "let go" at Acts 28:25.

Paul's seven letters written during Acts describe the imminent return of the Lord, expected in the lifetime of the Acts period believers. Please consider these passages; Romans 13:11-12, 16:20, 1Cor.1:7-8, 7:29-31, 10:11 (ends of the ages), 15:51 (we includes Paul as also in 1Thess.4:15), Hebrews 10:35-37 and Acts 14:22.

In this group Paul quotes the Old Testament over 300 times and in Romans alone he uses the phrase "as it is written" 14 times. Romans also contains around 70 Old Testament quotes leaving us in no doubt that Paul's Acts period ministry was precisely as he said it was, the purposes and doctrines found in the OT Scriptures. Here is a helpful link about some of the prophecy found in Romans;
<http://bibleunderstanding.com/romansprophecy.htm>

Paul's Acts period ministry is neither overlapping nor progressive as suggested by some who do not clearly see the differences in Paul's two groups of letters.

On arriving at Rome Paul calls the chief of the (dispersed) Jews and proclaims the Lord Jesus as their Messiah out of "both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning till evening", Acts 28:23.

Instead of responding to this wonderful message, these Jews in Rome were like the majority of their countrymen; some believed, some didn't and they argued among themselves;
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**.

The words "let go" translate the same verb in the original which is first found in the New Testament in a marriage context;
Mat 1:19 But Joseph, her husband to be, being just, and not willing to make her a public example, he purposed to **put her away** secretly.

Let us see these English words in Acts 28;
Act 28:25 And disagreeing with one another, they were **put away**.

In Acts 28:25-27, Paul pronounces the prophet Isaiah chapter 6, a condemnation prophecy which was against the nation not just the few Jews in Rome. Then God through Paul declares that the salvation of God is sent to the Nations (Gentiles);
Act 28:28 Therefore be it known to you that the salvation of God is sent to the nations, and they will hear.

At the end of the book of Acts the Nation of Israel was put aside and God's offer to restore Israel as a great and mighty nation under Christ was withdrawn. His purposes for the earth through Israel were put aside until a future date. The hope of their great kingdom on the earth was postponed, the imminent return of the Lord was put aside and Israel's advantages were put aside with them.

After Israel was put aside at Acts 28, the Lord revealed to Paul the present set of conditions, or economy which has continued to this day. Forgiveness of sins, righteousness by faith, sanctification and eternal life as God's gift remained the blessed portion of the children of God, however, instead of an earthly kingdom in view; the second group of letters of Paul point our hearts and minds to the heavenly places where Christ is seated at God's right hand. See Ephesians 2:4-7 and Colossians 3:1-4.

This present dispensation given to us through Paul was never part of Old Testament revelation as clearly declared by Paul in these passages:
Eph 3:8 This grace is given to me (who am less than the least of all saints) to preach the gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ among the nations,
Eph 3:9 and to bring to light what is the fellowship of the mystery which from eternity has been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ;
Col 1:25 of which I became a minister, according to the administration of God given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God;
Col 1:26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

These later seven (7) letters of Paul fall naturally into a group manifesting the elements of this wonderful new administration coupled with a scarcity of Old Testament references and these are;

[Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Titus, Philemon, 1@2Timothy](#)

These letters proclaim the wonderful inheritance for the newly revealed calling which is the Church which is His Body and are significantly different to the Acts period group in that they are limited to about eight (8) Old Testament quotes. If in fact our present economy was hidden in God then Paul can not use the OT as a means of affirming the ministry given to Him about it.

My prayer is that my readers will consider these things and study very carefully the content of the letters of our Apostle Paul.

The first group were written during the Acts period when Israel remained as God's people and the Gentiles were blessed with faithful Abraham.

The second group were written after Israel was set aside and are about the present dispensation of the grace of God in which all believers are blessed in Christ alone, in the heavenly places where Christ is seated at God's right hand.