

We continue our examination of Paul's Acts period ministry as part of our preparation for an examination of the great hope before us today.

If you have missed recent issues in this series, The Appearing, please get back to me.

Until we clearly understand the hope of the Acts period we shall struggle to understand the glorious change of hope brought in at the revelation of The Mystery to Paul after Israel were put to one side at the close of the book of Acts.

In our previous studies we have proven that Pentecost was not the beginning of anything and that the Acts period, according to our Apostle Paul, was the "ends of the ages".

So what did Paul teach in his Acts ministry regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, the soon coming glory to follow the ends of the ages? What was the hope during those "ends of the ages"?

Paul leaves us in no doubt as to his ministry and hope during the Acts period. Turn to Acts 13 the point at which, sadly, many feel the present "church" age began and begin this survey of Paul's Acts period gospel:

[Act 13:15](#) And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, Men, brothers, if you have any word of comfort for the people, speak.

[Act 13:16](#) And rising up and signaling with his hand, Paul said, Men, Israelites, and those fearing God, listen.

[Act 13:17](#) The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people in their residency in the land of Egypt, and He brought them out of it with a high arm.

Notice immediately that the Law and the Prophets sets the context as in Luke 24 and Acts 2. Paul begins with the typical redemption of Israel which pictures Israel's greater redemption, the hope in view during the Acts period.

Paul's gospel preached to both Israelites and Gentiles, like Peter's, points his listeners to King David:

[Act 13:22](#) And when He had removed him, He raised up David to them to be their king; to whom He also witnessed and said, I have found David the son of Jesse to be a man after My own heart, who shall fulfill all My will.

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

Notice Paul declares that Christ had been raised "to Israel" according to the oath God made to David. Christ is not among the Gentiles at this point. This is the Kingdom setting Paul is unfolding here which is exactly the same hope Peter preached in Acts 2. The interested reader might like to compare Acts 2 with Acts 13 point by point and notice the common elements; the gospels are practically identical. Peter and Paul both preach that The Lord Jesus is the Messiah raised to sit on David's throne.

How plain a Scripture do we need? Paul boldly declares that the salvation, the gospel he was proclaiming to both Jew and Gentile at that time was the promise made to the Fathers;

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

Would we proclaim this salvation of Acts 13 today? What exactly was "this salvation" Paul was proclaiming here?

[Act 13:26](#) Men, brothers, sons of the race of Abraham, and whoever among you fears God, the Word of this salvation is sent to you.

[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."

[Act 13:34](#) And that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He spoke in this way: "I will give you the holy promises of David."

[Act 13:35](#) Therefore he also says in another psalm, "You shall not allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

[Act 13:36](#) For after he had served his own generation by the will of God, David fell asleep and was added to his fathers and saw corruption.

Like Peter before him, Paul assures his listeners that Christ, the seed of David, had been raised to sit upon David's throne. This is the gospel Paul preached in Acts 13; this is the salvation in view.

Let the Scriptures guide you dear reader, please examine all the Old Testament contexts Paul used in his gospel for they will confirm that the hope he presented was all Old Testament. Here is the list;
[Acts 13:33](#) = [Ps.2:7](#), which Psalm is about Christ sitting on the holy hill of Zion and ruling the world.
[Acts 13:34](#) = [Isaiah 55](#), a prophecy calling Israel to turn back to God and the restoration to follow.
[Acts 13:35](#) = [Psalm 16](#), which Psalm Peter uses in Acts 2:27. This Psalm speaks about the inheritance in the presence of the Lord. This is not about an inheritance in heaven.

These Old Testament prophecies of hope for Israel constitute Paul's gospel of the Acts period. These great passages of the Kingdom on the earth are not the hope before us today.

Paul like Peter assures them that this same One who is to sit upon David's throne is the One in whom forgiveness of sins is found. Paul's address includes righteousness apart from the works of the law, verses 38-39, but this does not mean Peter did not know about it or the Church which is His Body began. Abraham and David knew of righteousness by faith but they will be part of the great Kingdom of heaven on the earth. Righteousness by faith through grace was never The Mystery of Ephesians hidden in God and away from ages and generations.

Now it is true that the Israelites in that city rejected the message and Paul gives them a warning:

[Act 13:40](#) Therefore beware lest that come on you which is spoken of in the Prophets:

[Act 13:41](#) "Behold, you despisers, and marvel, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no way believe, though a man declare it to you."

What was the warning in Acts 13:40-41? It certainly was not that Israel would be cast aside and the new dispensation of today would begin as the prophecy Paul uses is foreign to such a view. Please read Habakkuk 1 noting verse 5.

Habakkuk 1:5 is a warning about a northern army storming through the land, the very setting of that tribulation end of the ages for Israel that the Bible widely shows. The remnant, see Roms. 9:22-29, which was the believing Jews and Gentiles of that time, would be preserved from this tribulation as per Joel 2:32 and other Scriptures. Paul uses prophecy to warn his listeners of the tribulation. This warning, coupled with Paul's turning to the Gentiles in this chapter of Acts, is not to be misinterpreted as Paul dragging the Israelites into "the body of Christ" which is an impossibility since The Mystery of today had not been revealed at that time.

Some feel that the "Church age" started in Acts 13 because Paul turned to the Gentiles after the Israelites rejected the message.

[Act 13:45](#) But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy and contradicted those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

[Act 13:46](#) But speaking boldly, Paul and Barnabas said, It was necessary for the Word of God to be spoken to you first. But since indeed you put it far from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the nations.

[Act 13:47](#) For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have set You to be a light of the nations, for salvation to the end of the earth."

The turning to the Gentiles in Acts 13 was only local as Acts 14:1, 17:1-2 shows. Right through Acts Paul went to the Jew first, save on a few occasions. That these Gentiles were to be saved was never "hidden in God" even Peter knew this, see Acts 3:25-26. Paul's authority to include the Gentiles, like all his ministry of the Acts period, was based on the Old Testament Scriptures (Acts 26:22).

The OT Scripture in this case is Isaiah 49:6. Please note that twice Paul has referred to Isaiah in Acts 13 and the next verse in Isaiah 49 says this;

[Isa 49:7](#) So says Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation hates, the servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, rulers also shall worship, because of Jehovah who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose You.

The setting of Isaiah 49 is the certainty of God's purpose for Israel (see Romans 11:29) and the Kingdom on the earth. Paul's use of Isaiah in Acts 13 is a great antidote against those who claim the Church which is His Body started here. If Paul in Acts was given a progressive revelation then it started way back in Isaiah, a nonsensical view.

The reader should compare Acts 13:47 with the context of Isaiah 49:6 which prophecy is about Israel's re-gathering and glory under Messiah. This was the context and authority for Paul to turn to the Gentiles. A reading of Isaiah 49:5, Acts 13:47 and Romans 11:11 in relation to the Gentiles being saved during Acts is interesting. Israel was stumbling and Gentiles were saved during Acts to stimulate the Olive tree Israel, to provoke them to jealousy, as this verse in Romans clearly says;

[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).

Israel had "stumbled at that stumbling stone", see Acts 13:6-11, Romans 9:31-33 and 11:7-10, but they remained God's people (Roms.11:1-2). Israel had not been cast aside in Romans. The Kingdom under

their Messiah was the expectation of Paul until the end of the book of Acts.

Before leaving Acts 13 for now, please consider this verse;

[Act 13:51](#) But shaking the dust of their feet off on them, they came into Iconium.

I am certain my reader will remember Matthew chapter 10 and the setting there. Please turn your Bibles to these verses; Matt.10:5-8, 11-15, 23. While Paul's ministry included the Gentiles during Acts, it remains obvious the setting is in harmony with Matthew 10 and the hope found there.

The book of Romans was written towards the end of Acts and in it Paul writes that the time was short:

[Rom 13:11](#) This also, knowing the time, that it is already time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed.

[Rom 13:12](#) The night is far spent, the day is at hand; therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

[Rom 16:20](#) And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

I hardly think Romans was written at the beginning of any new "Church age" do you? So what was the hope of Romans?

The hope of Romans was all the Old Testament Kingdom as Paul proclaims in these verses. Please note the hope is found in "the things written before" not something freshly revealed which was previously hidden:

[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.

[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,

[Rom 15:9](#) and that the nations might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written, "For this cause I will confess to You in the nations, and I will praise Your name."

[Rom 15:10](#) And again He says, "Rejoice, O nations, with His people."

[Rom 15:11](#) And again, "Praise the Lord, all the nations, and praise Him, all the peoples."

[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."

[Rom 15:13](#) And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Here is the OT list of quotes Paul uses to affirm the "patience and comfort of the Scriptures" so far as the hope at that time was concerned;

[Roms.15:9](#) = [Psalm 18:49](#) (2Samuel 22:50). This Psalm speaks of the seed of David and deliverance from Israel's enemies.

[Roms.15:10](#) = [Deut.32:43](#), (see also Ps. 67:3-4, 68:32). The Song of Moses, also found in the book of Revelation, also speaks of Israel's redemption.

[Roms.15:11](#) = [Ps.117:1](#).

[Roms.15:12](#) = [Isaiah 11:1](#), please read all of Isaiah 11 which is a plain prophecy about peace and dominion being restored in "my holy mountain".

Every reader should read all these Old Testament Scriptures and note the context. In so doing it shall be wonderfully clear that the hope of Romans was the hope taught by the Lord in the gospels and by Peter in Acts 2, the soon coming Kingdom on the earth. The hope of Romans is not our hope today.

Again, if Paul was given a progressive revelation, then He started way back in the song of Moses in Deuteronomy and not one right divider would consider the Church which is His Body starting with Moses. If Romans was one of the last letters of Paul during Acts then he hasn't "progressed" as some are want to suggest. In fact contrary to such teaching, he has retraced from the Psalms and Isaiah in Acts 13 way back to Moses in Romans.

With the earth so clearly in view in Romans we can now read these passages in Galatians 3 and note the consistency in Paul's testimony during the Acts period;

[Gal 3:6](#) Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

[Gal 3:7](#) Therefore know that those of faith, these are the sons of Abraham.

[Gal 3:8](#) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all nations be blessed."

[Gal 3:9](#) So then those of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

[Gal 3:18](#) For if the inheritance is of Law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by way of promise.

[Gal 3:27](#) For as many as were baptized into Christ, you put on Christ.

[Gal 3:28](#) There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

[Gal 3:29](#) And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Notice verse 8? The Scriptures foreseeing righteousness for the Gentiles as embedded in Genesis 12. Righteousness for the Gentiles was never The Mystery "hidden in God" of Ephesians. Peter also uses Gen.12 in Acts 3:25-26. The reader should not miss this link of Righteousness by faith with that great nation God promised Abraham his seed would become. Being a son of Abraham and God means being an heir of Abraham and God, and in this context the inheritance is the earth given by promise.

All Paul's ministry during the Acts was found in the Old Testament and it included the great hope of the Kingdom. That hope was put aside with Israel at the end of the book of Acts when the ends of the ages were postponed and a new administration was revealed to Paul with a new hope. We must distinguish things differing.

The Church which is His Body was not revealed in the Gospels or at Acts 2 and it certainly was not revealed to Paul at any point in the Acts period.

Next lesson we shall begin to examine carefully what event it was that believers were anticipating during the Gospels and Acts period.