

Some zealous Christians expect May this year 2011 to be the Day of Judgment and we should get ready for the end. Today, the 16th of January, I strongly recommend you continue with your lives and go ahead if you're considering a new home or family for this will prove to be, in my Biblical opinion, yet another failed money spinning "prophecy" to destabilize the Christian community.

So placing aside these predictions we return our attention to the more important business of rightly dividing the Word of truth. To divide or separate is exactly our current process as we explore the most obvious differences in Paul's Acts period letters and his post Acts letters. Romans and Ephesians are placed either side of the Acts 28 divide and for our chart visit here <http://bibleunderstanding.com/Acts%2028-Paul's%20letters%20either%20side%20thereof.pdf> If that link doesn't work go here <http://bibleunderstanding.com/misc.htm> and click 19 sub link "Paul's Letters either side of Acts 28 a

This lesson we refocus on the imminent return of the Lord in the Acts period epistles and compare it to the completely different tone in the post Acts letters.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he assured them of the nearness of the Lord's Parousia in these passages. In the first verse Paul clearly anticipated living unto the "coming" of Parousia. In the second he links the Parousia with the day of Christ and goes on to assuage their fears that it was closer than it was because in his day there were the zealous false teachers. This is not to say Paul considered the Day outside his lifetime;

For we say this to you by the Word of *the Lord*, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord shall not go before those who are asleep. 1Th 4:15 (&17)

Now we beseech you, my brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you should not be soon shaken in mind or troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word or letter, as through us, as if the Day of Christ is at hand. 2Th 2:1-2

And for the imminent return of the Lord during the Acts period see also Acts 1:6, 14:22, 17:31 (about to judge) 26:7, 1Cor.1:7-8, 7:29-31, 10:11 (end of the ages), 15:51 (we includes Paul), Hebs.9:26 (end of the age, cp Matt.13:39-40, 49 & 24:3), Hebs.10:37 (a little, a very), James 5:7-8, 1Pet.4:7, 2Pet.3;10, 1John 2:18 (last hour), Rev.1:1 and 22:10.

Please be assured that the Acts period was not the beginning of "the church", on the contrary, the Acts period was the consummation of the ages for the church Israel and had that nation repented and turned to God, then the kingdom would have been restored almost immediately at the Parousia or "second coming" of the Lord.

Peter writes during Acts in his second letter chapter 3 that in regard to the apparent delayed coming of the Lord Paul had written to the dispersed Israelites about it, see 2Pet.3:15-16. We find Romans the perfect candidate because first of all, Paul hadn't been to Rome when he wrote and thus the fellowship would have been predominantly Jews (see Acts 2:10). Secondly the hope of Romans is identical to the hope Peter held, that is the earth and we have proven this in past issues. And thirdly, Romans explains the longsuffering of the Lord in relation to Israel which still stood when Romans was written. Please consider these verses;

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 did not believe, will not their unbelief nullify the faith of God?

Rom 3:4 Let it not be! But let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, "That You might be justified in Your sayings (or declared righteous in your words), and will overcome when You are judged."
Rom 3:1-4

Isn't it wonderful that Paul quotes Psalm 51 in Roms.3:4? Ps.51 is the penitent plea of David to God seeking forgiveness and RESTORATION of the joy of Salvation. During Acts the Lord called upon the nation of Israel to repent and turn to Him and then He, according to His word would turn to them, see Joel 2:12, Hos.6:1 and Zech.1:3-4. Paul uses a David's prayer of Psalm 51 which looks to the earth for in Ps.51 we find these words;

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar. [Psa 51:18.](#)

During Acts, the Lord through His apostles was calling upon Israel to repent so that restoration could be made and Christ would return to them, see Acts 1:6, 2:29-31 and 3:19-20. In Romans Paul writes this;

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

Despite the fact Israel remained unfaithful during Acts; this did not negate God's faithfulness to them. Back in the wilderness wanderings, Israel was unfaithful but God lead them into the Promised Land at Trumpets with Joshua. In the Exodus, God gave Israel 40 years to learn, and find their loyalties and faithfulness to Him. Likewise this is the longsuffering of the Lord during the Acts period. That Kingdom anticipated was coming but as in the past, only the remnant would enter while the wicked and perverse generation would die. Paul writes during Acts that the gifts and calling (singular) are without change of mind and all Israel would be saved, see Roms.11:29, 25-26.

When would all Israel be saved? The answer is simple, when the Deliverer comes out of Zion and that was imminent 2000 years ago. Here are the passages from Romans which prove it. In the first, child birth pangs are those pains which immediately precede the birth. In the second, the Day as in 2Pet.3 and 2Thess.2:1-2 was imminent, and the third confirms the hope of Romans as the earth because the original threat against Satan was in paradise, Roms.16:20 being a reference back to Gen.3:15-16 which is also a context of childbirth;

And we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. [Rom 8:22](#)
(for other Gospel and Acts period birth pang references see, Matt.24:8, 1Thess.5:3 and Rev.12.)

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. 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 13:11-12](#)

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

When Paul urged the Romans to present their bodies a living sacrifice in chapter 12:1-2, I wonder if it wasn't just a euphemism to serve the Lord fervently? Perhaps they were to die as they endured that great tribulation. Please consider Acts 14:22 and 1Cor.7:26 and this verse; ...because of the present necessity; that it is good for a man to be so (that is unmarried). [1Co 7:26](#)
Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. [1Co 7:27](#)

... brothers, The time is short. It remains that both those who have wives should be as not having one. [1Co 7:29](#)

Now let us turn to Ephesians which presents the Post Acts hope of the heavenly places. The imminent return of the Lord and the tribulation was postponed at Acts 28. Here are two

passages which speak to the relaxed change of pace evident in this post Acts letters;
Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, Eph 5:25

Eph.5:21-33 is the longest exposition for husbands and wives in the New Testament and is certainly contrary in spirit to 1Cor.7:29. There is no pressing need for husbands to live as though they did not have wives after Acts 28, or that a pregnant or nursing wife was facing woe as in Matt.24:19. Before Acts 28 the suggestion is that falling pregnant was not helpful but after Acts 28, speaking of children, Ephesians exhorts fathers as follows;
And fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph 6:4

In fact, Paul had advised children to obey their parents, he wrote of servants and masters and things that cover the ordinary course of life under peace. The conflict in Ephesians was not the antichrist and his armies, no advice is given to flee into the Judean Hills, rather the armour was to be worn against the opposing Principalities and Powers in high places, the very place where our blessings and inheritance is found;

Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world's rulers, of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Eph 6:10-12

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; Eph 1:3

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love *with* which He loved us (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised *us* up together and made *us* sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God, Eph 2:4-8

There is a total lack of urgency in these post Acts Letters. The focus is not the earth and the imminent return of the Lord. The by faith grace salvation of Ephesians 2 is not the salvation in view in Romans linked with justification by faith through grace. Romans looks to the earth when Israel had not been cast aside but the Salvation by grace in Ephesians is centered in the heavenly places where our Lord and Head Christ Jesus is seated at God's right hand.

The dispensational truths of Ephesians were revealed after Israel had been set aside at Acts 28 and the tribulation preceding the second coming and the second coming itself were set aside with her.