

We are enjoying a series which identifies some of the wonderful differences in Paul's post Acts letters; the things which are uniquely ours today in the Lord Christ Jesus. Here is the wonderful opening to Ephesians;

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

The church to which we belong was revealed to Paul after Israel was put aside at Acts 28, not before. Pentecost is not the "birthday" of our church, the Acts period is not "the beginning" of our church. At the end of the book of Acts, not the beginning, Israel was put to one side for a time and then Paul received the set of conditions that exist today. The church to which we belong was only revealed after Acts 28.

What does this mean? Aren't all believers in the Lord Christians? Yes, we could say that, though believers were first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26). Then if they are all Christians doesn't that mean everyone is in the church going to heaven? No, it does not! Abraham was made righteous by grace through faith, but Abraham is not part of our calling.

So what about those Christians in the Acts period? They believed in the Lord Christ Jesus, they were saved by faith in His shed blood, death burial and resurrection weren't they? Yes of course they were saved by the same faith we express but does that mean our calling started back then? Absolutely not! Let me explain.

Last lesson we gave some humorous examples of traditional errors and this lesson we have to address a very serious one. To learn we must unlearn and this can be very difficult.

As I grew up in the Christian community and noticed all the different denominations I was told we all belonged to the "one true church". This not only extended to the friendly folk in the other "churches" but included all the faithful at all times. Abraham was included, King David, Noah and of course, the ones who believed in the Lord in the Gospels and Acts period. Everyone belonged to the "true" church and everyone was going to heaven. This made me comfortable and it sounded good at the time. However, this is a deception and is untrue no matter how many times we hear it.

Israel is a called out company, an election. Israel is a church to which we believers today do not belong. The Father has a purpose for Israel; she will be a great and mighty nation on the earth in her special land. Most of us are aware of this, if not, please read again Genesis 12:1-3. The church Israel will be blessed on the earth and all the families of the earth will be blessed through her.

The Father also revealed through the Prophets another called out company of faithful ones who would partake of all the blessings of Abraham, including the Kingdom on the earth and the wonderful City God prepared for Abraham and those of like faith. This called out company; this church, was not destined to be blessed in the above heavens either and we can read about it in Hosea chapters 1 & 2 and Isaiah chapters 1 & 10. The members of this church had the same overcoming faith as Abraham and during the Acts period it included Jew and Gentile believers. Let us see this in the writings of our apostle Paul.

Here is the gospel of their salvation as found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians;

[1Co 15:1](#) And, brothers, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and in which you stand;

[1Co 15:2](#) by which you also are being kept safe, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

[1Co 15:3](#) For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures,

[1Co 15:4](#) and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;

Today, we believe this same good news but back then, during Acts, because they believed this same gospel at that time, did that make them members of the church which is His Body? No it did not! The church which is His Body was not revealed at that time. So what was their church; what was their calling and what was their hope? We have already referred to the prophets and here are the following Scriptures through Paul which supply the answers;

[Rom 9:23](#) and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had before prepared to glory;

[Rom 9:24](#) whom He also called, not only us, of Jews, but also of the nations?

[Rom 9:25](#) As He also says in Hosea, "I will call those not My people, My people; and those not beloved, Beloved."

[Rom 9:26](#) And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them. "You are not My people; there they shall be called sons of the living God."

Can you see Paul says plainly that the believing Jews and Gentiles of the Acts period were CALLED according to prophecy? Their "church" was the remnant the prophets spoke about. Peter refers to Hosea in 1Pet.2:10.

[1Pe 2:9](#) But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession, so that you might speak of the

praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
1Pe 2:10 *you* who then were not a people, but now the people of God, those not pitied *then*, but now pitied.

The Bible student might like to note that Peter also refers to Isaiah 28:16 in 1 Pet.2:6 which is the very prophecy Paul uses in Roms.9:32-33 & 10:11. Peter and Paul are on the same prophetic page regarding the faithful of the Acts period. Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles says the believing Jews and Gentiles were the called of prophecy, Peter an Apostle to the Jews says the believing Jews were of the same company.

These faithful believers, yes Christians, of the Acts period were the called out company of prophecy and they were to be blessed with faithful Abraham;

Gal 3:21 *Is the Law then against the promises of God? Let it not be said!*

Gal 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.*

The reader can check out the following references for their hope at that time, Acts 13:32, 14:22, 17:30-31 (the world in view, not heaven), Acts 26:6-7, 18, 22 (note the inheritance is that which the prophets spoke about), Acts 28:20, Roms.9:25, 26 and Hosea 1:11, 14:4-7, Roms.11:25-26, 15:4-13, Gals.3:6-9, 18, 29, 4:26 and Hebs.12:22-26 to cite a few.

The earth was in view during Acts, the Lord's near return with the trumpet blast as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to sit on David's throne was the hope held. The supernatural gifts of prophecy were enjoyed during Acts as a foretaste of the coming Kingdom on the earth, Hebs.6:4-5.

We see how all of these things of the Acts period are associated with the earth, the new earth and the New Jerusalem (which will ultimately replace the Old Jerusalem when it descends to the new earth). These things are not ours today; they were put aside with Israel at Acts 28.

Let us now read of our blessings and their location as given to Paul for us to embrace in this wonderful dispensation of the grace of God, the Mystery;

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

Paul uses a contrast here to emphasize our blessings. He writes "every" (plural) spiritual "blessing" (singular). Our blessings are spiritual. We will not be blessed with faithful Abraham in the Promised Land; the Jerusalem which is above is not the mother of us all today.

This phrase "in the heavenlies" does not occur anywhere else in Scriptures except Ephesians. This is where our blessings are located. Here is the very next reference to "in the heavenlies" in Ephesians;

Eph 1:15-16 *Therefore I also, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,*

Eph 1:17 *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,*

Eph 1:18 *...that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

Eph 1:19 *and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength*

Eph 1:20 *which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,*

His riches of glory inheritance (for us) is located where Christ is seated at the Father's right hand.

Our every spiritual blessing is "in the heavenlies" where Christ is seated at God's right hand.

The power in us (not experienced by human senses) is the same power which raised our Head to the heavenlies. Our blessings are located in our inheritance which is in the very same place; "in the heavenlies".

This wonderful inheritance, hope and riches of blessing was not given to Paul prior to Israel's setting aside at Acts 28.

Let us recognize "the things differing" and rejoice in our hearty compliance with these words of Paul for us today;

Col 3:1 *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.*

Col 3:2 *Be mindful of things above, not on things on the earth.*