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...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

The Hopes Of God's People #2

GOD'S PEOPLE

Before we can consider the hopes of God's people, we must establish who "God's people" are, that is, who are those, according to the Scriptures, whom He claims as His own. We find that the people of God may be identified in four classes. These are, "children of God" and three companies that He has called, or summoned out from among His children, for service. We read of "children" of God in John 1:12, **"...as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons (children) of God."**

"Sons" in this verse is the translation of the Greek plural of *"teknon"*. It denotes "born ones", not males or sons. Throughout the ages those who by faith in God's sacrifice received eternal life, became "children" of God.

John 3:36 tells us that those who became children of God have eternal life as a present possession. We read that, **"He that believeth on the Son (God) hath everlasting life."**

While all of God's children have eternal life and the relationship of a child to its heavenly Father, some are called out from among them for adoptions, that is, for positions of sonship. They are called out for particular purposes of the Father and given particular relationships to Him.

We find three companies that the Father has called out to sonship. They are, (1) The nation of Israel, seen in the relationship of "Wife" of Jehovah, (2) The faithful ones of Israel with Gentiles in the Acts years, seen in the relationship of "Bride of the Lamb," and (3) The faithful ones since the close of the

history in Acts, in the relationship of the Body of Christ.

The adoption of the first company, the nation of Israel, is seen in the Lord's words to Pharaoh. We read in Exodus 4:22,23, **"Israel is My son, even My firstborn...Let My son go, that he may serve Me."** And in Hosea 11:1, **"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt."**

This sonship position was still Israel's after Christ's ascension for we read in Romans 9:4 of the, **"Israelites...to whom pertaineth the adoption."** (sonship) The nation of Israel enjoyed the relationship (figuratively) of "Wife" of Jehovah. She received the love and benefits of that position. However, like a harlot, she was unfaithful to the Lord and took many lovers (gods). He said to Israel, **"Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me."** (Jer.3: 20)

The second company called out to sonship is the "Bride of the Lamb". In the period covered by the Book of Acts, the faithful were told, **"...ye have received the Spirit of adoption (sonship)".** (Ro.8:15)

In the years of Acts, Gentile believers were told that they were "sons" of Abraham, not by birth, but by faith. That qualified them to receive Israel's adoption. (Gal.3: 7;4:5,6) Paul's words to this Bride company were, **"I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."** (2 Cor.11: 2)

The third company called out to sonship after the years of Acts, is the

Church which is the "Body of Christ." We read of their adoption in Ephesians 1: 3-5. There we learn that their adoption was in the mind and plan of God before the foundation of the world. To this church, the Apostle Paul wrote, that before the foundation of the world, the Father, **"...hath chosen us ...Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (sons) by Jesus Christ to Himself."** (Eph.1:4,5) "Adoption of children," in verse five, is the translation of the Greek *"huiiothesia"*, *"huiio"* meaning male or son. The word then means the placing of one as a son.

In this company there is no national privilege for Israel, or any nation. Instead, faithful saints out of all nations are joined together to form one body whose members are equal. Christ is the Head of this body, not its King. We read that the Father, **"...hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, Which is His body."** (Eph.1: 22,23)

In conclusion, we see that God has called out three companies and given each a sonship position and a unique relationship to Him. Each was also given a particular hope, which we shall examine in future papers. And finally, we shall examine the pleasant future of the "children" of God.

J. Heltzinger

2002 Phoenix Bible Conference

Plan now for the Spring Bible Conference in Phoenix, April 5-7, 2002. Our featured guest speaker will be Alan Schofield from London, England. Further details will be provided in upcoming issues.

THINGS COMMON AND THINGS THAT DIFFER

Having examined the word *hope*, which is the translation of the Greek “*elpis*” in the New Testament, we found that it is used of the confident expectation of good. It is unseen, it is future, and it is pleasant.

We found in Scripture that “God’s people” may be identified in four classes. They are “children of God” and three companies that the Father called out from among His children to whom He gave an adoption, that is, a position of sonship. Those three companies are: (1) The nation of Israel, seen as the Wife of Jehovah (2) The faithful of Israel and Gentiles in the Acts period, seen as the Bride of the Lamb, and (3) The Church out of all nations which is seen as the Body of Christ.

We read in John 3:36 that “Children of God” have eternal life as a present possession. **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”** However, those in the 3 companies, in addition to the present possession of everlasting life, have added *hopes*. Evidence of this is seen in the usage of our word *hope*. It is reserved for use only of those in the three companies with adoptions.

We will look briefly at the hope of each of the three companies with adoptions and then at the future that “Children of God” may enjoy.

When we examine the hopes of the Wife, the Bride and the Body, we find that there are features common to all of three companies and there are features that differ among them. Among those features common to all are:

1. The Lord is their Hope
2. Promises concerning their hopes
3. Resurrection or change to immortality
4. The Lord’s presence among them
5. Judgment

Among those features that differ in

The Hopes of God's People #3

the hopes of the 3 companies are:

1. Relationships to the Lord
2. Things promised
3. Times when hopes are realized
4. Realms of inheritance
5. Rewards and losses

Let us first examine those things common in the hopes of the three companies.

THE LORD IS THEIR HOPE

All hopes are “in the Lord”, (Jehovah), Christ Jesus, the Savior. Hopes exist because of Him and apart from Him there could be no hope. It is He, Who makes all pleasant futures possible. Let us never forget that it is not *what* is our hope but first, *Who* is our hope. The three companies with adoptions, the Wife, the Bride, and the Body, all acknowledged the Lord as their Hope.

The Wife, the nation of Israel, knew that the Lord was her Hope, but she played the harlot and was unfaithful to Him. Jeremiah their prophet cried up to the Lord, “...**we have sinned against Thee. O the Hope of Israel. ...O Lord, the Hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, ...they have sinned against the Lord ...the Hope of their fathers.**” (Jeremiah 14:7,8; 17:13; 50:7)

About 500 years after Jeremiah’s words we see in the Book of Acts that the national Hope was still the Messiah promised to the fathers. When King Agrippa examined the Apostle Paul, he declared that he was accused by the Jews, “...**for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.**” (Acts 26:6) Finally, in the last days of Israel’s opportunity to receive her Messiah, when Paul was imprisoned in Rome, he told the chief Jews there that it was, “**for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.**” (Acts 28:20) Thus, we see that the Lord Himself was, and will be again the Hope of the Wife, the nation of Israel.

The Lord is the Hope of the Bride company. Their Hope is that given the nation of Israel - and more. The prophet Joel foretold of the day of the Lord, when the heavens and earth would shake, “...**but the Lord will be the hope of His People.**” (Joel 3:16) The Bride’s *hope* is called a “better hope” with better promises. (Hebrews 7:19). Their *hope* is better because the Lord, their Hope, will come to them 1000 years before the rest of the nation is raised (Rev. 20:4,5), and also, God has prepared a city for them. Paul wrote members of the Bride company, “...**of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.**” (1 Thes. 1:3) Peter said they had a living *hope*, because Christ had risen and was alive evermore. (1 Pet. 1:3) Those living in the years of Acts waited for the coming of Him Who is their Hope. (1 Cor. 1:7)

The Church which is the Body of Christ has ONE HOPE; it is the ONE LORD Who is their Head. (Eph. 4:4,5) It is “in Him” that every sweet expectation of theirs is found. We read in Ephesians chapter one that it is “in Him” that they have blessing, redemption and inheritance. It is HIS appearing to which they should look. They are to be, “**Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ** (Tit. 2:13) (Eph. 4: 4 Members of this Body are warned about, “...**not holding the Head.**” (Col. 2:19) They are urged to hold fast to Him Who is their Head and *hope*, and “...**be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,**” that good news of their calling. (Col. 1:23)

In summary, Scripture teaches that “Hope” is one of the names of our Lord. How fitting this title is, for He is the *hope* of all His people, and in a particular way, He is the hope of those whom He has chosen and called out to sonship.

J. Heltzinger

The Salvation God #3

ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." The salvation of the Lord here meant deliverance from Egypt. But it further signifies their deliverance from bondage. Bondage represents sin. Their deliverance would become a type and shadow of being delivered or saved from sin. Many years later, Paul would write in Rom 5:12 that sin had entered because of one man and that resulted in death. Ultimately, deliverance from sin means deliverance from death, resurrection from the grave.

When we open the New Testament, the first occurrence of the word salvation is associated with being delivered from sins. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and revealed the truth concerning the birth of Christ, through Mary, "**And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.**" (Matt 1:21) The name Jesus is the Greek equivalent of Joshua, and means "Jehova the salvation". We will see that "salvation" in the NT speaks of more than just an act of deliverance from something. "Salvation" is a person. And that person is Christ. The same is true in Acts 28:28. It is not merely salvation being sent to the Gentiles, but a person, Christ, "the salvation God". Soon thereafter, in his last seven letters, Paul, would make known this "salvation God", not through the Scriptures of the prophets, but by the revelation of a secret, which had been hidden in God before the ages.

The principal of Israel being the channel for blessing to the nations was demonstrated to them in a sign, when they first entered the wilderness after leaving Egypt. "**And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there.**" The twelve fountains of water represented the twelve tribes of Israel supplying the life stream (the Word) for the seventy palm trees which represented the 70 nations. This was a shadow of God's desire for the nation of Israel.

To appreciate the usage of the word salvation in Acts 28:28 where we read that the "salvation God" was sent to the Gentiles, it will help considerably if we understand how the word is used in the Old Testament, the responsibility given to Israel concerning salvation and their understanding of it from Abraham until the close of the book of Acts. In almost every occurrence in the OT, the terms 'salvation' and 'Saviour' are exclusive to Israel. It was God's desire that Israel become "**a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation**" with the intent that they would deliver the gospel of salvation to the rest of the world. The promise to Abraham was that, "**in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.**" (Gen 22:18) Salvation was always intended for all the peoples of the world. But, there was a timing element involved, first Israel, then the nations. That fact was no secret (mystery), it was prophesied. We must separate the salvation prophesied in the Scriptures for the world that was intended to come through Israel from the salvation that is made available to the world by pure grace apart from that prophesied program and which was hidden in God before the ages.

If we look at the words 'salvation' and 'Saviour' in the Old Testament, we will see the basic meaning of the word, i.e., "to deliver". In most cases, the context indicates individuals or groups of individuals being delivered from an enemy. We often associate the meaning of salvation with being "saved from sin". In the OT, we are hard pressed to find mention of anyone being "saved from their sins". It was written that they would be "redeemed from their sins", but not saved from their sins. (While there is an association between redemption and salvation, there is a difference.)

The nation of Israel is a "sign" nation. They require "signs" (1 Cor 1:22) and outward demonstrations of God's power. From the time of Adam onward, we are made aware of the types and shadows that would be a part of their history and intended to lead them to Christ. The work of salvation was no exception. In Ex 14:13 we read, "**And Moses said unto the people, Fear**

There is further evidence of this principal from the verse quoted above in Matt 1:21, "**for He shall save His people from their sins.**" It is "His people", Israel, to whom this salvation was promised. It was necessary that they first understand and believe the truth that had been prophesied throughout their generations. They were the channel that the gospel of salvation would be made known to the world. Prior to Abraham, the world had "known God" but they "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful". Because of their "vain imaginations", they became fools and "changed the uncorruptible God into an image". (See Rom 1:18-32.) This is what the world did with God. Rather than destroying the world, God called out Abram. Not because he was a righteous man, for he came out of idolatry. But, because of God's faithfulness to His word that someday He would send a Redeemer, His son into the world.

Further evidence that the gospel of salvation was to Israel can be found in the words of the Lord in John 4:22-24 when He spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, "**Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.**" The time element is evidenced here. First, the Lord says that salvation is of the Jews, just as the OT Scriptures described. But there would come a time when true worshippers, Jew or Gentile, would worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. This occurred during the Acts. Finally, He says, the time was at hand, that a hand full of faithful believing Jews would learn what He meant about worshipping in spirit and in truth.

After the Lord's death and resurrection, it was the responsibility of the twelve Apostles to deliver the message of salvation to Israel. The opportunity for Israel to become a "kingdom of priests" was at hand. Just before His

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ascension, He told the eleven, "...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (land)." (Acts 1:8) They were to be witnesses not throughout the earth, but throughout all of Israel, which included Judaea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the land. The Greek word for land is "ge". It is translated 'earth' 188 times, 'land' 42 times as well as 'ground' and 'country' several times. In Acts 1:8, the Lord was specific when He described their boundaries. Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria were all part of the land of Israel. The expression "the uttermost part of the earth" should be translated the uttermost part of the land". The only record of any of the twelve's ministry going beyond the land of Israel during the Acts period was that of John, whom, from the Isle of Patmos, wrote the book of Revelation and is a subject matter for another time. Revelation was written sometime after Peter had opened the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles in Acts 10. A study of Acts will reveal that the Apostles fulfilled the Lord's request. The record of Acts 10 was the only time we read of the twelve's ministry being offered to anyone other than Israel. This occurred as a result of Israel's unbelief. It opened the door for

the ministry of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

It was Paul, not the twelve, that was commissioned to take this prophesied message outside of the land of Israel, i.e., "to the ends of the earth." "**For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.**" (Acts 13:47) Paul quoted from Isaiah 49:6 which spoke of a day when the Lord would be 'salvation' for not only Israel, but the nations. But it is clear from the context that salvation was offered to the Gentiles, not as the intended "kingdom of priests", but because of their unbelief, "**It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.**" (vs 46)

In the first 12 chapters of Acts, the primary emphasis is upon the ministry of Peter and the other disciples and their ministry to Israel. In the remaining chapters of Acts, the emphasis is upon Paul's ministry, to Israel first and then the Gentiles. Once again, his ministry to the Gentiles is a result of their unbelief. After the Acts, Paul makes no distinction between Israel and the nations. It is no longer the "gospel of salvation to the Jew first and then the Greek".

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At the close of the book of Acts, when Paul arrives at Rome, he calls the elders of the Jews together and for the last time, proclaims the gospel of salvation concerning Jesus, who is the Christ, according to the Scriptures of the prophets. It is at this point we read of the final record of anyone of the nation of Israel rejecting this message. The next thing we read is that the "salvation God" is sent (apostled) to the Gentiles.

From this point on, the writings of the Apostle Paul would be different. He would no longer declare the Lord Christ Jesus and salvation according to Scriptures of the prophets. Instead, the source of his message was by the revelation of the mystery, hidden in God from the ages. And the Lord Christ Jesus could now be proclaimed in His fulness, His preeminent position as Head of the church which is His body. And now could be revealed "the unsearchable riches of Christ" as never described before to any creature, in heaven or on earth.

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