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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 #4

The Wife, the Bride of the Lamb, and the Body of Christ *Features Common in Their Hopes: Promises Given*

The Lord is called the Hope of (1) Israel, seen as the Wife of Jehovah, of (2) The faithful remnant of Israel with Gentiles in the Acts period, seen as the Bride, and of (3) The faithful individuals out of all nations, the Church seen as Christ's Body. We now look at another feature common to these three companies. It is that the Lord gave each company promises concerning their hopes.

He made promises to the nation of Israel concerning her *hope*, first to Abram and then to his seed. Some promises He made to Israel were conditional upon her faith/obedience and some were unconditional, that is, they would be fulfilled whether or not Israel was faithful.

God promised unconditionally that the nation would possess the land, "**...from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.**" (Gen. 15:18; 28:13)

He promised unconditionally that Israel would have a king and kingdom forever. We read His words to King David, "**...thine house (family), and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.**" (2 Sam. 7:16) The throne of David is secure forever because Christ, the heir to David's throne, arose and is alive evermore. His kingdom on earth will be set up, and it will endure forever.

The Lord made promises to the nation about her future that were conditional upon her obedience. We read that when she puts away her sins and cries up to the Lord, "**the Redeemer shall come to Zion.**" (Isa. 59:20) About six hundred years later, while the apostles appealed to Israel to put away her sins, the

Apostle Paul spoke the same words. He wrote, "**There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.**" (Ro.11:26) The promise of the Messiah's coming is sure, but the time of His coming is conditional upon Israel's repentance.

God's promise to the nation concerning her service was also conditional. He told her, "**...if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant ...ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.**" (Ex. 19:5,6)

The nation as a whole has not yet met the requirement for fulfillment of this promise but she will one day. We read that Israel will be gathered, "**...and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles ...And I (the Lord) will also take of them for priests and for Levites.**" (Isa. 66:19,21) "**...ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God.**" (Isa.61: 6)

The company called the "Bride of the Lamb," the overcomers of Israel with the Gentiles of the Acts years, embraced the *hope* of Israel and have the promises that God made to that nation. In addition, because of their faithful endurance, they have God's promise of rewards. They are promised that they will be raised and be with Christ one thousand years before the rest of Israel is raised. In vision, the Apostle John saw the promises to some of the Bride company fulfilled. He wrote, "**...they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.**" (Rev.20: 4,5) Daniel wrote of this reward as the resurrection to "**everlasting (age abiding) life,**" as opposed to the resurrection 1000 years later "**to shame and everlasting (age abiding) contempt.**" (Dan.12: 2)

The Bride company also had the promise of dwelling in a city that comes down out of heaven when the earth is new. We read of those faithful that, "**God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.**" (Heb. 11:16)

The Church which is Christ's Body is anchored securely on a promise that God made before Adam's creation, before Satan's fall, and before the ages began. We read that members of the Body of Christ have the, "**...hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world (ages) began.**" (Tit.1: 2) This "eternal life" is not the life that became needed when death passed upon all men, for God planned this "life" before death entered His creation. Before death existed, He made this promise concerning a family to live with Him above the heavens under the Headship of Christ. Looking back, we now know that the execution of God's plan for the Body of Christ was delayed when sin entered the world and death passed upon all men. However, we must not read the need for life back into the period when God made the promise of "life" for the body of Christ.

In addition to the life promised, members of the Body of Christ have the promise of appearing with Christ above the heavens, in bodies like His resurrection body of glory. (Col.3:4) (Phil.3:21)

The blessed *hope* of the Body of Christ, like that of the Bride and Wife, rests upon the Lord and the promises made by Him, "**that cannot lie**", upon Him Who, "**...calleth those things which be not, as though they were.**" (Ro.4:17)

In the next paper we will consider "resurrection or change to immortality" as a feature also common in the hopes of the Wife, the Bride, and the Body.

J. Heltzinger

The Seventh Day

Do you know what God first called “holy?” One might think it was the original material universe that He created perfect, or His land, or His mountain, or His temple. However, He did not say it first of a thing or place, but God said it first of a day. He said it of a period of time.

We read that, after God had reconstructed the earth and its heaven out the chaos it had become, “...on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” (Gen.2:2,3)

God “sanctified,” the seventh day, that is, He designated it holy or set apart for Himself. Exodus 20:11 tells us that He rested the seventh day and He, “...blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” “Sanctified” in the verse above, as well as “hallowed” and “holy,” are all translations of the Hebrew word, “kah-dash” which is a prime root. From it comes “koh-desh” which is also translated “holy” and is use of *holy* ground (Ex.3:5), *holymen* (Ex.22:31), *holy* garments Ex.31:10), and *holyoil* (Ex.37:29). But, it is the seventh day, the “sabbath”, that God first called holy. We see this in the ten commandments where He applies “holy” to only one word, the sabbath. It was the word “sabbath.” We read, “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.” (Ex.20:8)

Did you know that in Hebrew, the seventh day, the weekly sabbath, is the only day in the week that has a name? The first day of the week, our Sunday is called, “yom rishone” (day one), Monday is called, “yom shenee” (day two), Tuesday is “yom shleeshee” (day three), Wednesday is “yom rivee’ee” (day four), Thursday is “yom hameeshee” (day five), and Friday is “yom sheeshee” (day six). Only the seventh day has a name. It is called the sabbath, or “shabbat,” from the Hebrew verb *shah-vath*.

“Shah-vath” means to cease from exertion, to rest or repose. We read in Genesis 2, verses 2 and 3, that God “rested” (shah-vath) on the seventh day, that He “rested” (shah-vath) from all

His work. We also read there that on the seventh day, “**God ended (finished) His work.**” Because it says that He “finished” His work on the seventh day, some of the rabbis believed that God created something more on that day, something that was not a product of “labor.” They have suggested that He created a day of celebration, a time of peace and joy, a period without toil, one free from all that hurts or offends. They say that the seventh day was the climax of His work; the six-day’s work was done in preparation for it. The sabbath day, they said, pictured the delight that God intended for man and Himself.

We see evidence of this in God’s rejoicing after the six days. We read, “**And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.**” (Gen.1:31) We read that He blessed (spoke well of) the seventh day and set it apart. It was His sabbath; it was “**holy to the Lord.**” (Ex.31:15) Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath. (Mark 2:27) God gave a commandment to the children of Israel to “remember” the Sabbath day, to “keep it holy” (wait for) it (Ex.20:8). They were to *celebrate* His sabbaths. (Lev.23:32)

Today, in varying degrees of strictness, religious Jews observe the seventh day, the weekly sabbath. They anticipate the evening arrival of the seventh day with great joy, for then the mundane things of the world are put away, and they rejoice in the Lord and His goodness. Jewish theologian, Abraham Heschel has written, “The Sabbath is no time for personal anxiety or care, or for any activity that might dampen the spirit of joy. The Sabbath is not a time to remember sins, to confess, to repent or even to pray for relief or anything we might need. It is a day for praise, not a day for petitions. Fasting, mourning, demonstrations of grief are forbidden ... it is a sin to be sad on the Sabbath day ... The Sabbath is an example of the world to come.”

Surely the seventh day pictures that ultimate rest that God planned for man. However, when men rejected God, God chose the nation of Israel as His ministers, and He gave sabbaths to them. They were to observe the sabbaths as signs (pointers) and reminders. The

sabbaths were to point to the true “rest” that the Lord would give them and to remind them that He was the covenant keeping God. We read, “**Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.**” (Ex.31:16,17) Here, in His instructions to Israel, why did God refer back to His sabbath designed before that nation existed? Was He not showing that He originally intended His rest for all mankind?

The manner in which Israel was to observe the sabbath demonstrates that it was solely a day of the Lord’s making. There were no objects involved in its observance such as were in the sacrifices and feasts. No animals, or bread, or oil were required. In this celebration He alone was to be the fullness and sufficiency. In this day man must refrain from any effort of his own or suggestion that he may contribute to completion of its joy.

When we, members of the church which is Christ’s body, think on the things of the sabbath, we are struck with the fact that we have only begun to understand the mind of God in His sabbath. But one thing we do understand, and that is, that we entered into a rest of God when we became members of the church which is the body of Christ. For then, we ceased from efforts to be acceptable to God and rested in the good news that we are, “...**accepted in the Beloved.**” (Eph.1:6) We quit seeking satisfaction in religious systems and ordinances, for we learned we are, “...**complete in Him.**” (Col.2:10) And, we put away all objects used in worship, all rituals and observance of days. Instead, “in spirit” we worship Christ, Who fulfilled all such types and shadows. (Col.2:16-23)

Israel will one day enter into the rest that God prepared for her, and believers in all ages will enter the rest prepared for them, but we are privileged now to have entered a rest that God prepared for us before the ages began. (Titus:1:2)

J. Heltzinger

The Salvation God #4

The last verse of John's gospel reads, **"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."** What an awesome statement concerning our Lord's brief service upon this earth. And most of the events recorded concerning Him occurred in the last three and a half years of His life. If we include the things the resurrected Lord did from Heaven during the Acts from Heaven, and the things accomplished after and unto this day by the ascended Lord who is Head of the church which is His body, then the statement is even more incredible.

When we consider, that of all of the things that could have been recorded, and the few things that were recorded, we realize that the things chosen must have some special significance. In John 20:30 we read that "...many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." John speaks of many signs which could have been included in his gospel. Of the volumes that could have been written, the Holy Spirit chose eight specific signs to show us that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and in believing we will have resurrection life. (For the eight signs, see App. # 176 of the Companion Bible.)

This principal holds true with the subject matter at hand, "The Salvation God". The word "Saviour" occurs 24 times in the New Testament, twelve times before Acts 28:28 and twelve times afterwards. The word is distributed among the NT writers as follows: *John*, twice; *Peter*, five times; *Jude*, once; *Paul*, twelve times and *Luke*, four times. Luke's accounts include *Mary*, the mother of Jesus, once; an angel of the Lord, once; *Peter*, once and *Paul* once.

The limited number of the times that Saviour is used, how it is used and by whom it is used, indicates that it is a title of great respect and is used with purpose. It would appear that this title of

great reverence would have been used more often. The significance is in the way it is used concerning Jews and Gentiles before and after the Acts period.

In the Old Testament, the word Saviour is used only relating to the nation of Israel. In Isa 43:3 we read, **"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: ..."**. (See also Isa 49:26 and 60:16.) Until the close of Acts, it was a term that would be understood by the nation of Israel. After Acts 28:28, we will see that those who wrote (Paul and John), used this word with the world and Gentiles in mind. John's gospel was written after the Acts period, but the event that he records occurred at the time that Christ was on earth.

Note also that Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles during the Acts period, does not use the term Saviour in any of his seven epistles written during the Acts. Nor does he use the word in connection with Gentiles in Luke's account of his ministry in the book of Acts. On the contrary, the only time that Paul uses the word Saviour before the close of Acts is found in Acts 13:23 where he declares that the risen Jesus was Israel's saviour.

Let us briefly consider the use of this word before Acts 28:28:

Lu 1:47 - After learning that she would bring forth "the Son of God" into the world, Mary (of the seedline of Abraham) rejoices in **"God my Saviour"**.

Lu 2:10,11 - **"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all (the) people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."** These were the words of the angel of the Lord that appeared unto the shepherds. The definite article is used with the word "people" in verse 10. It was to "the people" of the nation of Israel that He was born. Verse 11 reiterates to whom He was born, **"For unto you..."**. It was the people of Israel who looked for a Saviour. In general, Gentiles had no interest in the prophetic Scriptures. The only Gentile that was interested in the birth of Christ was Herod, and he sought to destroy Him. It was Israel who was chosen to introduce

the Saviour to the world.

Acts 5:30,31 - Peter was brought before the council in Jerusalem for preaching Christ to Israel. He declares that this man Jesus, whom they had slain, was He Whom God had raised up to be their Saviour: **"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."** (vs 30,31) Peter stayed within the boundaries of his ministry. He says that Jesus was a Prince and Saviour **"...for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins"**. (There is no mention of Gentiles here.)

Acts 13:22,23 - When Paul came to Antioch, he went into the synagogue and was given the opportunity to speak. He gives a dissertation on the history of Israel and says, **"And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will.' Of this man's seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."** There is no mention of Gentiles here either. This confirms that Paul's ministry during Acts was to the Jew first.

2Pet 1:1,11; 2:20; 3:2,18, 1John 4:14 and Jude 25. - Peter, John and Jude wrote their epistles to Christian Jews. Their ministry was to the circumcision. The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul. (Gal 2:7) Peter shows utmost respect when he uses this title of reverence when speaking of Christ. Jude uses the phrase **"the only wise God our Saviour"** when he closes his epistle.

John is unique in his writings in that he recognizes Christ as the Saviour of the world. 1John was written after Acts 10, where Peter had opened the door to the Gentiles. It was written after Paul had been chosen for his ministry to the Gentiles and after the council at Jerusalem spoken of in Acts 15. John was aware that the gospel of salvation now included

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The Salvation God ...cont'd

the nations according to prophecy. He could say “...**the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.**” (1Jo 4:14).

John 4:42 – John’s gospel was written after the close of the book of Acts. However, this verse speaks of an event that occurred prior to the Acts period, during the Lord’s ministry on earth. In John chapter 4 we read the account of the Samaritan woman at the well. It is of great significance that the Holy Spirit chose this event in the use of the word Saviour.

Samaritans were despised by the Jews. They were a mixed breed. Centuries before they had intermarried with the Assyrians. They had their own place of worship other than Jerusalem as the woman states in vs 4:20. Yet, they looked for a Messiah as this account will show. They play an important role in the Lord’s ministry because He “**came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance**”. (Mk 2:17) This was something that the spiritual leaders of Israel had difficulty understanding. After the Lord’s resurrection, He includes Samaria as part of the territory to be included in the ministry of the Apostles (Acts 1:8).

In this account in John 4, by the words the Lord spoke, many believed and in vs 42 we read, “**Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have**

heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” It is interesting to note that in the records of the four gospels, the word Saviour does not occur in any context of the spiritual leaders of the nation of Israel. There is no verse where the word is used with the scribes, the Sadducees, the Pharisees or the Sanhedran. It is a term that is used only of those who believed that Jesus was the Christ. We see in this account, these Samaritans overcame the traditions of men. They tasted of the living water that He offered them. They proclaimed that He is “**the Saviour of the world**”. In this passage, we see beyond the prejudice that had excluded the Samaritans. We see the real intent of the prophetic Scriptures that Christ would be salvation for the world.

In these twelve passages of Scripture written before Acts 28:28, the usage of the word Saviour is used only by those who believed that the man Jesus was indeed the One about Whom the prophets had spoken. The Saviour was to come through the seedline of Abraham. He was to be made known first to the nation of Israel. It was to be their responsibility to be a separate and Holy nation and to introduce the Saviour to the world. Because of their unbelief, He was made known to Gentiles, but no-

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where do we read this word used in connection with Gentiles or used by Gentiles during this period of time.

It is not until after Acts 28:28 that the word Saviour can be used freely by Gentiles. In our next article we will consider the usage of this word in the letters that Paul wrote after the Acts. In those twelve passages we can rejoice in the fact that we Gentiles, as members of the church which is His Body, can freely proclaim “**Christ, our Saviour**”!

B. Bagby

Phoenix Spring Bible Conference
April 5-7, *Friday*: 7:00pm, *Saturday*: 9:30am, 10:30am, 1:15pm, 2:15pm at Glencroft Retirement Center (Basement of Condos), 8611 N 67th Ave. Glendale, AZ. *Sunday*: 9:00am and 10:00am, Glendale Community Center, 14075 N. 59th Ave, Glendale, AZ. Featured guest speaker: Alan Schofield from London, England.

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