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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 # 8

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

If we presume that "judgment" means condemnation, then we may tremble at the thought of God's judgments. However, in the King James Version of the Bible, the Greek word "*krino*" and its derivatives that are rendered "to judge, judgment" etc., refer simply to *evaluation*, or *assessment*. The conclusion of the assessment may be favorable or unfavorable.

Furthermore, God's judgments can not be evaluations of our sin or sins, for we read in John 1:29 of, "**the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world.**" By the sacrifice of Himself, Christ took away the sin of the entire world. No man can be held accountable for what the Son of God took away. Notice also that His sacrifice was sufficient for the sin of the *whole* world, not merely for the sin of believers. This is reiterated in 2 Corinthians 5:19 where we read, "**God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.**"

Lest we mislead readers, let us point out that, though the sin of the world is erased, this does not give eternal life to all men. However, with sins gone all men may then come to the Savior and receive the gift of eternal life by trusting in Him.

Also relevant to our subject, Scripture teaches that there is no future judgment for those who reject God's gift of eternal life. They are already judged by their own unbelief. We read in John

3:18, "**...he that believeth not is *condemned (judged) already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**" Because they have already been judged, they will not be resurrected to judgment; they will remain in the grave and perish. Psalm 49:12, and 14 tells us that man without life from God, "**...is like the beasts that perish.**" "**...Like sheep they are laid in the grave; Death shall feed on them.**"

While there will be *no* future judgment for those who refused God's gift of eternal life, there *are* future judgments for those who have received eternal life. They will stand before a righteous judge, not for sentencing, but for rewards. We read of crowns, the prize, recompenses, and reaping what is sown. We read of positions of honor and powers to be earned by faithful service to the Lord.

In the papers to follow we will consider the future judgments of three families of God, who received eternal life and who were also called out from among His children to serve Him. These are, (1) The Wife (Israel, the nation), (2) The Bride (faithful overcomers), and (3) The Church which is the Body of Christ (members out of all nations). God gave these families positions of sonship and responsibility. He also gave each a message to hear (obey), to guard, and to make known. His words to these families differed. The Lord holds each family accountable for the truth that He has given them.

Judgment Of The Wife Of Jehovah

Let us first consider the nation of Israel, seen as the Wife of Jehovah. The

Lord likened the creation of Israel to the birth of a babe to which He gave life and then nourished and brought to womanhood. (Ezek. 16:4-6) He called her His Wife, and though she committed adultery many times with other gods, He did not forsake her. Instead she forsook Him.

In Old Testament times the Lord said to Israel, "**Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel.**" Jeremiah 3:20, "**Thou hast committed fornication with the Egyptians... Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians.**" Ezek. 16:26,28

While Jesus was on earth He said to Jerusalem, "**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!**" Mt. 23:37

And finally, after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, Israel the Wife, still refused to come to Him, and the Apostle Paul declared God's divorce of His wife and His decision to send His Salvation to the nations. God's message was, "**Be it known therefore unto you, (Israel) that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, (nations) and that they will hear it.**" Acts 28:28

The Lord had created Israel to be a kingdom of priests and teachers of the nations. She was to teach the nations about Him, the One True God, but she

...cont'd on page 4

The Salvation God # 7

Paul, in his letter to Titus, “brings to light” three things: eternal life promised before age-times, the grace of God that brings salvation to all men and the lovingkindness of God our Saviour. In our last article, we looked at the first of these. The second thing “brought to light” and the second pair of Saviour titles occurs in Titus 2:11-14, “**For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world**” (Tit 2:11,12)

We have stated that these three things have been “brought to light” in this dispensation, after the end of Acts. This statement will undoubtedly be met with opposition or perhaps confusion. Eternal life was certainly not a new subject after Acts. But “eternal life promised before age times” was. So, we pose the question, is the “grace of God that bringeth salvation” something “brought to light” during Paul’s Acts ministry or is this truth part of the revelation of the mystery given Paul after Acts?

The Greek word “*charis*” occurs over 150 times in the New Testament. The basic meaning of the word is “favor” and is so translated six times in the KJV. A majority of the remaining times it is translated “grace”. Grace is often described as God’s “unmerited favor”. To state unequivocally that this is the definition is incorrect. The word is used of Jesus in His youth in Luke 2:40, 52. We would certainly be amiss to say that the “unmerited favor” of God was upon Him.

The word grace is by no means exclusive to the New Testament. The first occurrence of the Hebrew equivalent informs us that “...**Noah found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord.**” (Gen 6:8). The Hebrew word “*chen*” occurs approximately 69 times. John wrote that true grace came by Jesus Christ and that grace was in place of grace. “**And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for** (Gr., *anti*, in place of) **grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth (true grace) came by Jesus Christ.**” (John 1:16,17)

“Grace” is “grace”. So, when Paul

writes, “...**the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men**”, we ask, is he reconfirming what he spoke about during the Acts period, or is he speaking of something that was revealed after Acts?

Prophesied Grace, The Gospel Of The Grace Of God and The Dispensation Of The Grace of God

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost...” (1Pet 1:10-12) Peter speaks of salvation that was written in the prophets and of “**the grace that should come**”. He states that this truth was not revealed to the prophets who recorded it, even though they enquired and searched diligently for it. Rather, it was revealed to those at that present time who were preaching the gospel.

It is important to distinguish between salvation that was prophesied and salvation that was kept secret before age times. It is also important to distinguish between grace that was prophesied and grace that was hidden from the ages, untraceable and brought to light by Paul’s post-Acts ministry. Although “grace” is “grace”, there is a difference in the way in which it was administered. The grace that Peter speaks of that was prophesied is the same grace that Paul speaks about during the Acts and calls the “**gospel of the grace of God**” (Acts 20:24). It is the same grace that he speaks about in his letters during this period to the Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians and Galatians. This grace is associated with promises made to Abraham and Gentiles who would come to a saving knowledge of Christ through the confirmation of covenants written by Old Testament prophets. This grace is associated with a hope on earth and a New Jerusalem.

The “grace of God that brings salvation and has been brought to light to all men” is associated with the unsearchable riches of Christ and the dispensation of the Grace of God given exclusively to the Apostle Paul.

“**For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; ...**”, (Eph 3:1-3) “**Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:**” (Eph 3:7-9)

At the close of Acts, when the hope promised to Israel was set aside, God gave Paul a stewardship. He was entrusted with “**the dispensation (stewardship) of the Grace of God**”. Under this stewardship, grace is offered freely to all men apart from the promises made to Abraham and his seed. This is what was “brought to light” that Paul mentions in his letter to Titus. Not only is this truth brought to light to mankind, but principalities and powers in heavenly places are made privy to the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph 3:10)

This grace is our teacher. “... **teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (age)**” (Tit 2:12) It is an understanding of the depths of the riches of this grace that allows our new man to overcome ungodliness and worldly lusts, and walk worthy of the calling by which we are called.

As we noted previously, there are three pairs of Saviour titles in the letter to Titus. It is interesting to note that in this passage, we read the title “God our Saviour” used in the context of servants or slaves. “**Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters,**

The Salvation God ...cont'd

and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." (Tit 2:9,10)

Nowhere in the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles do we read of any objection to the slave society in which they lived. The Lord Himself spoke several parables using this Greek term *doulos* translated servant. Many who were slaves were so because they owed a great debt and were not able to repay it. (See the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matt 19:22-35.)

Paul is the only writer who gives instructions to slaves as well as masters (slave-owners) and those passages occur in his last seven letters. When Paul wrote his last seven letters, Roman law provided a certain level of freedom and protection for slaves. In many cases, slaves lived better lives than free laborers. In Eph 6:5, Col 3:22, 1Ti 6:1 and Titus 2:9, Paul instructs slaves to be obedient to their masters. The Greek word *doulos* is the same word Paul used several times in describing his and several of his companion's relationship with Christ as "servants of Christ". It is the same term that is used of Christ

Jesus in Phil 2:7 where we read that He "...took upon Him the form of a servant..." So when we see the Saviour title "God our Saviour" used with instructions to slaves, we marvel at the magnitude of this remarkable "...**grace that bringeth salvation**" that "**hath appeared to all men**". We can understand the importance of this abundant grace in the words of Col 3:10,11: "**And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond (*doulos*) nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.**" This grace not only allows Gentiles access to the title "God our Saviour, but makes no distinction between free men and slaves.

We find the "Christ Jesus" Saviour title in Tit 2:13,14: "**Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing (appearing of the glory) of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.**" The ASV and RSV recognize the translation of the glorious appearing

as the "appearing of the glory". This is significant in that it speaks of the glory that is associated with God's presence and heavenly places. This is the glory that the Lord mentions in His prayer in John 17:5, the glory He had with the Father before creation, before the ages, before the *kosmos*: "**And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world (*kosmos*) was.**" When Paul introduces the hope of Christ's calling and the "**riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (holy of holies)**" in Eph 1:18, it is no wonder that Paul's prayer for the church is addressed to the "**Father of glory**", the only place this title is used in Scripture. (Eph 1:17) This glory is the hope of the church which is His body, "**When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.**" (Col 3:4)

It is in this grace that we rejoice and have our calling: "**Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (before the times of the ages)**". (2Ti 1:9)

B. Bagby

Is The New In The Old?

Recently, at a symposium on the preservation of the Bible, the speaker referred to the teaching of the late Henrietta Mears, a Bible teacher well known in California. She was quoted as saying, "The Old (Testament) was the New (Testament) concealed, and the New was the Old revealed." But, is this entirely true? Is *all* the New Testament in the Old Testament?

We asked the speaker if he had considered Paul's claim to having received a revelation from God that was not hidden in the Old Testament. Had he noticed that Paul said the revelation he received was, "**the mystery (secret) which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now (emphatic) is made manifest to His saints**"? (Col. 1: 26). Paul said that this mystery was, "**the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ,**" and that it was "**hid in God,**" not hidden in the writings of the prophets. (Eph.3: 8,9) Paul also said that this mystery was given to him, "**to fulfill (complete) the word of God.**" (Col. 1: 25,26)

Indeed, the Old is seen revealed in the Gospels, in the Book of Acts, and in the epistles written during the years of the Acts history. However, after that, about AD 64, we find a message unheard of before. In Paul's last seven epistles written after Acts, we learn that the ascended Christ has been exalted to a position never before revealed. He has been made Head over principalities, powers, and all beings everywhere. And He is the Head of the church which is His body. This church is said to be a family of saints out of all nations; saints who are equally blessed and who have equal inheritances above all heavens. In previous years, Gentiles were grafted into Israel's hope and blessings, and were unequal in position and privilege. (Romans 9: 3-5 and chapter 11)

During the years of Acts, Paul and others preached mysteries hidden in the "**scriptures of the prophets**" (Romans 16: 25,26), but after the Jews' final rejection of the Messiah (Christ) and their refusal of the "hope of Israel," then God sent His Salvation (Christ) to the Gentiles. (Acts 28: 24-28) It is after this pronouncement that we read of the mystery that was hid in God and revealed to Paul for us Gentiles.

Is the Old Testament the New concealed and the New Testament the Old revealed? Search and see. You may discover a hope and inheritance in the New Testament not revealed in the Old.

J.Heltzinger

Hopes # 8 ...cont'd

was unwilling to fulfill His purpose for her. Though there was always a faithful remnant in Israel who longed to fulfill God's purpose, the nation as a whole did not. As a result, the Lord put away Israel, His wife. He divorced her and the marital bond between them was cut.

Because of her unfaithfulness, the nation of Israel did not receive the kingdom and blessing that God longed to give to her. Nevertheless, she will rise in the future to be with Him as His restored Wife. God will keep His unconditional covenant with her. We read His words to her, "**Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee... And I will establish My covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.**" Ezek. 16: 60,62

The Lord (Jehovah) will restore Israel as His wife when He has raised *all* the dead saints of Israel. Not until the "faithful martyrs" of Israel have been raised and have reigned 1000 years, will the rest of Israel be raised. It is said of them, "**But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand**

years were finished." Rev. 20:5

When those thousand years are finished, the rest of Israel's saints will rise to stand before God. Before a great white throne their "works" will be assessed. We read, "**...the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**" (Rev.20: 12) These are evaluated before a pure (white) throne. They have "works" that merit assessment. Only God's children rise, only God's servants have "works" that may be judged.

Scripture speaks of "ages to come." It tells us that the Lord *has* an "eternal purpose," literally a "purpose of the ages" that He made in Christ Jesus. (Eph.3:10) The purposes of God in the ages to come are not revealed. Only glimpses of those ages are seen in that some will reign on earth for ever and ever (to the ages of the ages). And, we members of the Church that is Christ's body have a place in the heavenlies, "**That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His**

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grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7)

In the ages to come Israel, Jehovah's wife, will be with Him in their earthly inheritance. They will be rewarded according to their works and will surely say, "**...In Thy presence is fullness of joy; At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**" Ps. 16:11

* In this case, because the outcome of the evaluation is known to be unfavorable, the translators used the word "condemned" for the Greek word normally translated "judged."

J. Heltzinger

Correction:

The Last issue of Bible Explorations was incorrectly labeled as Volume 15 and should have been labeled Volume 16. We apologize for any confusion.

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