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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

Is God Finished With Israel? # 3

Is God finished with Israel because all prophecy concerning Israel has been fulfilled? In earlier papers we considered Ezekiel 37, where we read that God said He would revive the whole nation, place them in their land; with David as their king, and place His sanctuary in their midst forever more. Has all this happened since God declared His intent? If so, where is the evidence of this in Scripture or in secular history?

To learn more about the duration of Israel's existence, we have looked at the covenant God made with Abraham and his seed (Israel). We saw this Abrahamic Covenant was a contract God made with Abraham, *unconditionally* giving him and his seed a specific land and a posterity to inherit it. We also looked at the Mosaic Covenant, the contract Israel made with God, in which they agreed to keep His Law and earn the right to *possess* the land that they legally own.

While the Abrahamic Covenant required nothing of Israel, the Mosaic Covenant required them to keep 613 rules of God's Law in order to be worthy to possess the Land. This they were unable to do and can never do while in the flesh. But God declared He would make a new covenant with them and put His Law in their hearts and enable them to keep it. We read in Jeremiah 31:31-36, **"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:...this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel...I will put My law in their inward**

parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people." This contract was ratified by the precious blood of Christ and became in effect then, but only a few individual Jews partook of the New Covenant benefits. A small number in the Nation enjoyed the empowering of God; when His spirit was poured out upon them, but the Nation, on the whole, has not as yet enjoyed the blessings of the New Covenant.

There is another covenant that adds weight to the view that God is not finished with Israel. It is the Davidic Covenant, the contract God made with David and his seed, promising unconditionally that he would always have an heir to his throne, and that his kingdom would be without end. David's sin did not alter God's unconditional contract. Even then God said He would not take His mercy from David and He repeated his promise to him saying, **"...thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever."** (2 Sam. 7: 16)

Many kings in David's lineage forsook the ways of God, but that did not change God's promise to David. We read, **"Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant's sake, as He promised to give him alway a light, and to his children."** (2Kgs. 8: 19)

In addition, in the Psalms the Lord spoke of the unending reign of David and Christ, the Greater David. We read in Psalm 89, **"I have found David My servant; With My holy oil have I anointed him...I will make him My firstborn, Higher than the kings of the earth. My**

mercy will I keep for him for evermore, And My covenant shall stand fast with him...My covenant will I not break, Nor alter the thing that has gone out of My lips" (Vs. 20, 27, 28, 34) Have David or Christ been made higher than the kings of the earth and reigned over the nations in glory as God foretold?

Christendom readily recognizes the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the dispersion of Israel and the sufferings of the Greater David, but what about the prophecies of the regathering of Israel and the glory of the kingdom that follows? We are reminded of Jesus's rebuke of some Jews who knew of the glory foretold of the Messiah, but who failed to see His sufferings foretold in Scripture. Jesus said to them, **"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"** (Lk. 24: 25) And, to the eleven disciples Jesus said, **"...all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me."** (Lk. 24: 44)

The "all things" written of Christ must include His return to judge His enemies and to reign in glory from Zion. It must include the restoration of the Kingdom promised to David, with a new Israel that is head over all nations. Peter referred to this when he reminded the Jews that God swore with an oath to David to raise up Christ to sit on His throne. (Ac. 2: 30) Peter called upon the Jews to change

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The Jehovah Titles # 3

We have stated that the name Jehovah speaks of the timeless Almighty God, Who was and is and always will be, and that He will be all that is necessary to accomplish His purposes throughout the ages.

From the beginning of the Scriptures, it is clear that God's purposes go far beyond this earth. The first verse of Genesis tells us that the original perfect creation included the heavens and the earth. Yet, in the very next verse, we learn that something happened to the original perfect creation and it became **"without form and void"**. We learn that, what was originally light, for **"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."** (1Jo 1:5), became darkness. John, in his gospel addresses this issue when he writes of creation and states, **"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended"** (Gr: *katalambano* – was not able to overtake it) **it not."** (John 1:5) The issue here is not about light from the sun, for it is dealt with later in Gen 1:16, rather, it is the matter of good and evil. See also 2Co 4:1-6 concerning the struggle with good and evil, light and darkness.

Sometime, long before Adam was placed upon this earth, sin had entered the universe and the judgement that resulted left the heavens and earth **"without form and void"** (Heb. - *tohu bohu*: formlessness, waste, confusion, emptiness, void). Isaiah 45:18 tells us that the Lord, Who created the heavens and earth, did not create it in this condition (*tohu*).

When Eve was deceived by "the Serpent", there was already an enemy in the garden who was trying to interfere with God's purposes. We note that God did not step in to protect Eve from this deception. Rather, He had given that responsibility or stewardship to Adam when He told him he was to "guard and protect" the garden with specific instructions for "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil". **"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep"** (Heb. – *shamar*: to keep, guard and watch, to protect) **it."** (Gen 2:15)

Sin had entered the universe and blemished God's original perfect creation and sin entered once again through Adam in the "reformed earth".

The whole of the Scriptures speak of God's redemptive purposes and how He has dealt with and will deal with sin. Not only the sin of Adam that resulted in "death" for all of mankind, but sin that

entered long before Adam, from the one of whom it is said **"sinneth from the beginning"** (1 Jo 3:8), that is, **"the devil"**. John further states in vs. 8 that **"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy (Gr. – *luo*: to unloose) the works of the devil."** What Christ accomplished on the cross loosened us from the chains that bind us to the works of the devil and the evil that is associated with it. What Christ accomplished in resurrection, loosed us from the "pangs of death". **"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed (*luo*) the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it."** (Acts 2:24)

This leads us to the next Jehovah title found in the 23rd Psalm: "Jehovah Jireh", Jehovah my provider. **"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want (Jehovah Jireh, for the Lord will provide)." David could say, "I shall not want"** or lack anything because he knew that the Lord would provide all that was necessary for him in his daily life to accomplish His purposes through him. God promised that through David, a type of Christ, He would establish His kingdom and throne through David's seedline. **"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."** (2Sam 7:16)

We see this principle established throughout Scripture for all of His children. In Gen 22, God tested Abraham and told him to offer up his only son. When Abraham proved himself by obeying, the Lord stayed His hand and provided a ram as a sacrifice "in the stead of" his son. **"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh (the Lord will provide): as it is said to this day, 'In the mount of the LORD (the Lord will provide it) it shall be seen.'"** (Gen 22:14)

This was a shadow of the day that God would offer up His own Son in our stead. He has provided His Son as the ultimate and only sacrifice that could be offered for the sins of the world. This is further demonstrated in the words of Paul in Rom 8:32, **"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"** The context speaks of those **"... who are the called according to His purpose."** (Rom 8:28) and assures "the called" that He will freely give them all that is necessary to carry out His purposes.

This is also true for those who are

chosen in Christ to the church Which is His body. In Eph 3:8-11, Paul writes of **"...the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"**. Paul was given grace and a stewardship to preach among the Gentiles the **"unsearchable riches of Christ"** (untraceable, not found in Scripture or prophecy), to bring to light **"the fellowship (and dispensation) of the mystery"** with the intention that **"principalities and powers in heavenly places"** might understand through the church, God's manifold wisdom.

Concerning God's purpose with His body, Paul **"bows his knee unto the Father"**(vs 14) and expresses in prayer his desire for the saints that they be granted these provisions:

- **"...to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man;**
- **That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;**
- **that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;**
- **And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,**
- **that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."** (Eph 3:16-19)

These provisions are far beyond our ability and comprehension. Yet, the Lord our provider **"...is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,"** (Eph 3:20) It is Christ, the head of the body, Who will fulfill His eternal purposes through those "chosen in Him before the foundation (overthrow) of the world".

His eternal purposes are intended far beyond this earth. The realm is heavenly places, above the heavens. In His grace, the church is seated there in Christ. The antagonists are spiritual wickedness and the rulers of darkness of this age. Their goal is to disrupt God's eternal purposes. Their desire is to prevent men from recognizing the "fullness" of Christ which is found in the truth of "the mystery" revealed through the Apostle Paul in his prison epistles.

It is "the Lord our provider" Who will see that His purposes are carried out. He will provide us with all that is necessary to accomplish those purposes for and through His body. We too can share the confidence that David knew when he wrote **"I shall not want (lack)"**, for I know that my Lord will provide.

B. Bagby

Devotionals

*"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for...
He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." (Isa.61:10)*

How often have we heard members of the church which is Christ's body say, or have said ourselves, "Why me? Since I am so unworthy, why did God choose me to be in the body of Christ and dwell with Him far above the heavens?"

Truly there is no one *worthy* of such honor or position, for the Scripture tells us the Lord looked down from heaven and said of mankind, "...**they are all together become filthy: There is none that doeth good, no, not one.**" (Psa.14:3) And, Isaiah said of Israel, God's chosen nation, "**But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.**" (Isa.64:6) The Apostle Paul said that in him was no good thing, and we know that no matter how hard we try, we can not attain to the righteousness required to enter God's presence. And yet, we read that we who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, "...**should be holy and without blame before Him.**" (Eph.1:4) How can we attain such righteousness?

Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves after sinning, but that covering was not acceptable to God, and He Himself made them coverings of righteousness. Israel offered sacrifices for their sins, but it was the Lord Who gave them the robe of righteousness.

We, members of the church which is Christ's body, have no righteousness of our own. We are told, "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.**" (Titus 3:5) However, God has also covered us with righteousness; we have, "... **that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.**" (Phlp.3:9) We are accepted in the Beloved because of *His* faith; *in Him* we are "made meet" to have a share of inheritance in the holy of holies above the heavens.

Even though Israel was a rebellious people, God saw no wrong in them. He saw them blameless in the righteousness He gave them. They were hidden beneath holiness to which they of themselves could not attain. This was pictured in the Tabernacle where twelve loaves of bread, one for each of Israel's twelve tribes, were placed on a table and covered with white frankincense. God saw the twelve tribes sinless and pure, covered with His righteousness as the loaves that represented them were covered and white.

Even though we, members of Christ's body, are often rebellious and sometimes stumble in our walk life, we rejoice that our salvation and calling above are not conditional upon our own righteousness, but are part of God's plan in Christ, made before the ages began. We give thanks that we, like Israel, are "hidden ones", that our fleshly state is not seen by our Heavenly Father, for we are told, "...**your life is hid with Christ in God.**"(Col.3:2)

"...the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...hath chosen us in Him" (Ephesians 1:3,4)

"**God... hath chosen us.**" Who is this That has made a choice? It is GOD. Think of that! It is He Whose name is "I Am", the Eternal One, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. It is He Who holds the sun, moon and stars on track and Who elevates kings and puts them down. It is He Who can still the wind, or give breath and life to a babe. It is He Whose presence is in all places, and from Whom none can hide. It is He Who knows every thought and intent of the heart.

"**God ...hath chosen us.**" Can we comprehend that the Almighty God has made choices and revealed them unto men? Can we grasp that He, Who knows what was before the ages began, and Who knows what will be after the ages are past, has considered possibilities and selected some persons and nations for His purposes?

"**God ...hath chosen us.**" Us? Who are these that make up this group called "us" in this Scripture? They are not all mankind, nor are they all who are saints. These words were written to *faithful* saints. We are saints because we are God's children. We are "faithful" saints, (believing saints) because we believed the secret God revealed to the Apostle Paul for us. We believed God's truth concerning Christ and His new creation, the church which is His body. We rejoiced that we were members of that church whose hope and calling is with Christ, far above all heavens. We forsook the hope and promises to be had with faithful Abraham. We are those called "us".

"**God... hath chosen us in Him**" (Christ). God chose us, not for any good in us, but because we are "in Christ" and members of His body, the church. Some of us were gentiles, without a messiah (Christ) of our own and without a hope or promises unless we shared those of Israel. But now, Christ is among us; He is our Christ (messiah) and we are His.

It is almost beyond belief, that such grace is given to us gentiles, of whom some who were idolaters, and some enemies of God in our minds. No wonder Paul wrote, "**Blessed be (speak well of) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" (Eph. 1:3) Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts constantly praise Him Who chose us in Christ Jesus for His own.

Is God Finished ...cont'd

their minds so that those times spoken of by the prophets might come to pass. He said, **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”** (Ac.3: 19) Peter also reminded them Christ would remain in heaven, **“...until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”** (Ac.3: 21) Peter did not say the restoring of all things the prophets said was in doubt. Instead, he said that Christ waits in heaven until the “time” when Israel will repent. He awaits the time when Israel willingly obeys the Lord, and are ready to evangelize the nations as God called them to do. Christ’s return will be to the nation of Israel, not to the gentile church, though some gentiles may have a place in Israel’s kingdom.

Throughout the history of the Jewish people, Satan has attempted to destroy them by outright persecutions, wars, pogroms, and more subtle means such as aiding assimilation or engineering economic collapse. However, some Christians are to-

day, in ignorance, carrying out the most devious strategy of the enemy. They do away with Israel by simply ignoring her. They ignore the promises God made to Israel, or they decide God is finished with Israel and the Gentile church has replaced her and inherited her blessings and the hope of Messiah’s return. Many think they now have Israel’s calling to evangelize the nations. Some would even say there are no prophecies to be fulfilled, and there is nothing ahead except resurrection and judgment.

Ludwig Schneider, in “Israel Today” magazine, puts the situation this way: “Christians note the veil over the hearts of Jews that blinds them from seeing the Messiah. But when non-Jews don’t believe that God’s promises to Israel are still valid today, there’s a veil over their hearts, which encompasses all the nations. Whether Jewish or Gentile, these veils must be removed.”

May God remove the veils from all our eyes that we may see Him and His truth more clearly.

In the next study we will consider some of the chief reasons it is said that God is finished with Israel.

J. Heltzinger

Bible Explorations is a joint effort by a group of believers. Articles submitted are not necessarily the view point of the group collectively. Free to anyone upon request.

Annual Spring Bible Conference

The Phoenix Annual Spring Bible Conference is scheduled for the weekend of April 7th-9th, 2006. This year’s featured guest speaker is Michael Mecikalski of Boscobel, Wisconsin. Other speakers include Forrest Cottrell and Barnabas Bagby.

The conference will be held at the Moon Valley Country Club located at 151 West Moon Valley Drive, Phoenix, AZ. More detailed information and a map will be provided in the next issue.

Other 2006 Bible Conferences

TFT ‘Annual Conference:
June 2-4 at the Bible Forum, Peru
IN

Boscobel Bible Conference:
Sept. 1-3, Comfort Inn, Mineral
Point, WI

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