



History Of The Christian Hope

"The Story Of The Whole Gospel Of God"

History of the Christian Hope

History of the Christian Hope

“the story of the whole gospel of God”

by John Brown

for Straight Bible Seminar

www.straightbible.com

September 2011

All biblical quotes are from ESV unless otherwise noted

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®)

Copyright © 2001 by Crossway,

a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

All rights reserved.

ESV Text Edition: 2007

© www.straightbible.com, 2011

All Rights Reserved

Essay Reformatted for Publication February, 2012

Table of Contents

Preface.....	i
Introduction.....	1
The Story of Paradise.....	3
Covenant Contract, Part One: The Land and Nation.....	7
Covenant Contract, Part Two: The King of the Land.....	8
Thy Kingdom Come on Earth.....	11
Servants of the Most High.....	14
Old Covenant Passport: Entrance by Works.....	16
The Day of the Lord.....	20
God's Big Secret.....	24
New Covenant Passport: Entrance by Grace.....	28
Inheritors and Joint-Heirs of the Kingdom.....	37
When the Saints Come Marching In.....	38
The Rewards of God.....	41
New Age Jobs and Careers.....	45
Gospel of God Summary.....	53

Preface

This short essay is the “cliff notes” version of the Christian Hope. It tells the story of the gospel of God from the only source it is known to mankind: The Hebrew scriptures. The writers of both the Old Testament and the New were Hebrews through and through. All of scripture, both Old Testament and the New was inspired by the same God, the same intelligence. Therefore, the pattern of the gospel of God is a consistent pattern from the first entry of scripture to the last within it's message and told through Hebrew thinking. It is only, Western theologians and Bible commentators who have been subjected to centuries of reading scripture through the glasses of Greek philosophical thinking, who seem to have major problems with the beauty and symmetry of the all of the inspired writings together within the singular context of a singular author who spoke through men of Hebrew heritage.

This short overview of the story of the gospel of God and the Christian Hope could be expanded with each section becoming an entire book with more explanations, many more scriptural references and quotes from scholars to back up the points. However, quoting many men serves no purpose for the Christian Believer who accepts the validity of scripture as the single source of spiritual knowledge and accepts the concept that God is indeed the intelligence behind all the holy writings.

It is the hope of the author that this essay will start the searching Christian on a path of inquiry and discovery of many truths that might not have been taught in their church.

In that quest, it might be useful to read the last section, the “Gospel Summary,” first to get an outline overview of the entire essay. However, both the summary and this essay might contain ideas the reader might not have been taught in church. If that is the case, read in order every section to see how the story develops so you do not miss important portions of the whole gospel of God.

This essay is not written to confront error or to criticize Christian leaders for not telling some parts of the gospel of God or critical of their inability to assemble it altogether. Rather it is written to simply layout the whole story at once in a short form. If the reader feels confronted or mystified that parts of this story were formerly unknown, take heart that this story was not always known to the author either. I was not taught all this in church or Bible studies or any seminars, I had to do my own research in scripture and through many authors to discover these things

myself. It is a journey that each and every believer must travel for himself, a journey to challenge old thinking and adopt new as greater understanding of truth unravels.

I also am reliant on the guidance of holy spirit to witness to me that I have found the beauty and symmetry of the whole story of the Gospel of God. May God be honored with this effort and may His Body of Christ be built up by the reading of the whole story of the Gospel of God.

John 20:31 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. [KJV]

Introduction

“Throughout the biblical accounts of the preaching of Jesus and the Apostles we find a plain record that the Kingdom, is Christianity's principal concept. Throughout church history that has been a major eclipse of Jesus' central Message. It must follow, we contend, that the Christianity [faith] of Jesus and the Apostles and traditional Christianity [faith] are substantially different.” (quoted from “*Our Fathers Who Aren't in Heaven*” by Sir Anthony Buzzard, Page 155).

This quote is the summary of chapter seven, called “The Faith of Jesus” and tells the fundamental problem of Christians today. It is a major loss to modern Christians to not comprehend that Jesus and the first apostles were Hebrews through and through, by birth, by culture, and patterns of thought. It is little wonder that so much of Jesus' teachings and that of the first apostles are mysterious to Gentile audiences some twenty centuries after they were first delivered to a Hebrew audience. It should be plainly obvious that the Christian's expectation and Hope of Jesus' return would be greatly misunderstood when viewed as a theological island separated from the mainland of the Hebrew Gospel of God. The story of the gospel of God is told through the Hebrews' prophets, the Hebrew's Messiah and later by apostles of Hebrew heritage. It is a distinctly Hebrew story, delivered by Hebrew men who commonly shared a Hebrew culture.

It is necessary then to return to the Hebrew roots of the beginnings of the Gospel of God to gain the proper perspective of how post-Pentecost modern believers, fit into the great scope of God's master plan for mankind. We must regain a proper perspective of the Christian Hope of the return of our Savior and Lord by understanding that our Hope is in a Hebrew King who will reign over a kingdom on earth when he returns and sets foot on Zion, the Temple Mount, in Jerusalem.

It is also vital to understand that the nature of modern post-Pentecost believers was a hidden secret which God kept entirely within Himself until it was revealed to the first apostles *after* Pentecost. The contents of this secret was how the relationship of God's people became a different

History of the Christian Hope

kind of relationship from the ancient Hebrews. This new relationship became reality when God poured out His spirit upon mankind. This singular event marks a major unprecedented change in the status of God's people. This new revelation was not foretold but Jesus did indicate that greater spiritual truth would come later via holy spirit.

John 16:13. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

The story in this essay contains the old truth and the additional new truth prophesied by Jesus that would be later revealed by the Spirit of Truth.

The Story of Paradise

To start at the beginning, let us look to God's first people, Adam and Eve, introduced in Genesis. They lived in a place of God's making, a garden called Eden and also called Paradise. This story is told twice but it is the same event, the creation of man on the sixth day. The first time is Genesis 1:26-28. Here it says, God created man (mankind) in the image of God, male and female, and gave them dominion over all the fish of the sea, over all the birds of the air, over all living things that move.

The second telling of this same story offers additional details on the function of mankind in the garden. Man's function is described in Genesis 2:15-17 and then woman in Genesis 2:20-23. There are some who twist scripture and think that God made two women, the first who rebelled, and second as a replacement for the first. By this logic there should have been a second man too. No! This theory demonstrates an inability to read literature and is just a twisting of scripture to support a later pagan religion of "mother earth" as the source of all life instead of the Creator. This most ancient religion is still practiced today in many forms but all venerating the earth as the mother of all life.

Both of these two first humans were placed in a garden called Eden. It contained four rivers, which by any logical sense, locates it as a physical place on earth. It is not possible except to ignore these references to location to think that the original Paradise was anything but a specific location on the earth! A likely location, which has been identified in modern times by geophysical survey and satellite imagery, is at the North end of the Persian Gulf, within what is now called the nation of Iraq. Two of the rivers still exist by their same names and the satellite imagery shows two other extinct rivers, located exactly as scripture describes them.

In addition to the rivers, the garden had two main features, the "tree of good and evil" and "the tree of life." Due to inaccurate execution of God's instructions regarding the use of the tree of good and evil, man was forced out of the garden lest he also partake of the tree of life and live forever as a disobedient creature, separated from his Creator. Man partook of the

History of the Christian Hope

tree of good and evil and discovered, not godliness and perpetual (eternal) life as promised by the serpent but the consequence of disobedience to the Creator, namely a state of perpetual separation from the Creator. For this evil of breaking the relationship between themselves and the Creator, they were driven out of Paradise.

Genesis Chapter 3 [22] Then the LORD God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever— [23] therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. [24] He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

God drove out Adam and Eve from Paradise lest they partake of the tree of life and be condemned to an eternity of life without communion with their Creator: the opposite of God's plan for mankind. This was man's original error or original sin which cost him separation from the Creator and cost him perpetual life, a condition which has existed from Adam until the present time. The consequences of Adam's error has been passed down throughout time, the consequence of disobedience, also known as "original sin" which is manifest in that all men are born without communion with their Creator and all men eventually die, none live forever.

This is the problem addressed throughout scripture: God's plan for re-qualifying man for a return to God's garden and perpetual life. But the qualification for this is to pay the price exacted of him in the first place (death) and then total obedience to the Creator.

God has prepared a place for the renewal of access to the tree of life which gives perpetual life. The location of the tree of life identifies this place and can be seen at the end of scripture.

History of the Christian Hope

Revelation of John 2:7. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

There are only two places in scripture where the tree of life is found and both are referred to as Paradise. It is man's ultimate goal to return to Paradise, a new garden of God's making, a place here on earth wherein dwells righteousness, where man can live in fellowship with his Creator and partake of the tree of life. This is the great Hope of all of mankind, first for the Hebrews through whom we know the story but then for all the nations as well.

But man's state of separation from his Creator stands in between man and his Hope. Man is not qualified to enter into a garden of God's making, unqualified to enter into this new kingdom of God. Man is not qualified due to his original disobedience. This problem must be repaired and resolved. But God does have a plan to repair this breach between Himself and His people. The Repairer of the Breach

Even before Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden, God revealed the first shadow of His plan to restore man to his original condition. To the Serpent God spoke these words

Genesis 3:15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [seed] and her offspring [seed]; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

This saying is somewhat mystical until you realize the Hebrew manner of tracing bloodlines is through the male side. Refer to any genealogy in scripture and you will see almost exclusively, male names. In this light, what is suddenly odd in the reference above is a reference to the “seed of the woman” who does not have “seed” and also that instead of “seeds” plural, it promises a “seed” singular. This is the earliest revealing about the promised one who is to come that the reference is to only one person, not about many persons. The insight of the apostle Paul makes this distinction clear. This passage refers to one offspring, a singular seed, versus many many offsprings.

History of the Christian Hope

Galatians 3:16. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring [seed]. It does not say, And to offsprings [seeds], referring to many, but referring to one, And to your offspring [seed], who is Christ.

This reference to one seed, and not to many seeds is repeated to Abraham. Adam and Eve knew that there would be one born, but not from the seed of men but one born of woman (without a man's seed) who would be the repairer of this breach. The promise made to Abraham is a repeat of the promise spoken to Adam and refers to Christ as the repairer or Redeemer, the one who buys back that which has previously been the property of another.

Man, by being obedient to God's enemy, bought mankind away from God and paid the price of this transaction with his life. He became permanently separated from his Creator. The only way a man could undue this calamity is to pay back the adversary the price he got for man in the first place. (In Christ this price was paid: "*for you were bought with a price.*" I Corinthians 6:20a.)

Now any man could pay this price but only for himself. However, that would mean his death and then he would have no opportunity to live in fellowship with God. His separation would still be permanent unless he could partake of the tree of life and live. That's impossible if you're dead. Some one else had to pay the price to restore the relationship with God that qualified one to live in Paradise.

[Please note: This was a legal transaction, the purchase of mankind from his original owner, the Creator, thus transferring ownership, dominion and rule of man and the earth to God's enemy, Satan, also called the Devil. This transaction is why Jesus did not contradict Satan's rule in Matt. 4 and Luke 4.]

Covenant Contract, Part One: The Land and Nation

In scripture a contract between God and man is called both a “covenant” and a promise. The first covenant made between God and man is the one made to Abraham. It was made because of Abraham's obedience to God.

Genesis Chapter 12 [1] Now the LORD said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. [2] And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

This first promise is extraordinarily important to all believers. The first distinctive part is for Abraham to separate himself from the land of his ancestors and go to a new land which God would show him. The second part is a promise that a great nation will arise from Abraham to live in this promised land. This nation is so great that all the earth will be blessed by it, so much so that all nations who bless this nation, God will bless and all those who curse this nation, God will likewise curse.

[Please note: this land was not in heaven, ethereal or spiritual, it was a real place on earth, a place Abraham was traveling to see, the land of Canaan.]

Hebrews Chapter 11 [8] By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. [9] By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. [10] For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

History of the Christian Hope

Abraham was looking forward to a city that is described as existing in the new earth.

Revelation of John Chapter 21 [1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Neither Abraham nor his earthly descendants fully received this land. The land Joshua conquered was not the full extent of the land of Canaan promised either. They did not fully inherit.

Hebrews 11:39. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

The promise to Abraham was the eventual Kingdom of God on earth which has not yet been established. The land Joshua conquered and David later ruled was only partial and symbolic of the promise to Abraham. It was not the complete fulfillment of God's promise. That is still future.

Covenant Contract, Part Two: The King of the Land

The second great covenant was how the land and nation was to be governed. Again, this covenant was in response to obedience to God. God's covenant with David can be read in 2 Samuel 7:1-17. The word of the Lord was delivered to David by God's prophet Nathan.

The most important part of this prophesy is this:

KJV: II Samuel 7:12. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

Again in another place:

History of the Christian Hope

KJV: I Chronicles 17:11. And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.

Another part from this prophesy is quoted in Hebrews 1:5:

KJV: II Samuel 7:14. I will be his father, and he shall be my son...

We know from the spiritual insight of Luke and Paul, this seed of David was the same promised to Adam and Abraham, namely Jesus of Nazareth, whom Peter preached on the day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was poured out on men. This seed was the seed of the woman, promised centuries before. This seed came into existence without the intervention of a human male. God, via holy spirit, was the father of this seed.

Acts Chapter 2 [29] Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [30] Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,

It should be obvious that David died not having seen the fulfillment of Nathan's prophesy of the coming Godly anointed King who would establish David's throne over the kingdom forever. But that does not mean that it would not happen in God's time table. Notice how both the "seed of the woman" and the Godly anointed king of Israel is combined in Garbriel's announcement to Mary:

Luke Chapter 1 [26] In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed [legal promise for marriage] to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's [Hebrew: young woman] name was Mary. [28] And

History of the Christian Hope

he came to her and said, Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you! [29] But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. [30] And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

The Messiah Jesus had a dual role. Firstly he was the promised repairer of the breach between mankind and God as the promised, “seed of the woman.” His existence as a human was not started in the normal way of men and women but God by the power of holy spirit, substituted for the male contribution for conception and Mary became pregnant. Secondly, he was born into the house of David, though not a blood descendant. As such, he had a right to David's throne.

Now critics accuse Mary's husband of being from a cursed blood line according to the prophesy found in Jeremiah since this cursed name appears in the bloodline in Mathew.

Jeremiah 36:30. Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David,

However, this is another twisting of scripture. It is true that the name Jehoiakim appears in the bloodline in Mathew. However, the bloodline in Mathew is not of Joseph, Mary's husband but of Mary's bloodline! To ensure that the genealogy is preserved, a count of the generations is given, 14 in each of three groups. However, modern commentators count only 13 in the last set. In their arrogance, they subscribe to many excuses for their inability to account for this. But the answer is very simple: Mary's father was named Joseph, the same name as her betrothed. The expression “the man of” can refer not only to a husband, the most common way, but also

History of the Christian Hope

to an unmarried woman's father thus providing her an association and authoritative cover even though she is not married. This was the ancient Hebrew way of protecting women. They are always covered by a man's authority, whether married or not.

The Aramaic and Peshitta scriptures bear this out but the words used for both father and husband could be mis-understood. In fact, the reason for the division of the bloodline into three groups of 14 generations each is the very fact that confusion could result in mis-understanding the expressions for father and husband. In anyone's view, miscounting generations should have alerted Bible commentators that their understanding should be suspect, not the inspired writings of the apostles. Yet, through the centuries, men have blamed God for their own misunderstanding. The best answer, as stated above, is the Hebrew way of thinking that all women, married or not, are covered by a man's authority. They are covered by their fathers before marriage and then by their husbands after marriage.

Thy Kingdom Come on Earth

One might think this line of reasoning strange in the context of the modern Christian Hope. But traditional Christianity has relegated this hope of a kingdom on earth as though it pertained to the Jewish Hope only. Modern Western theologians and Bible commentators have not included this aspect of scripture in their expositions about the Christian's future Hope. This view separates Jesus and the first apostles from their Hebrew roots and heritage. This view breaks the symmetry between God's covenant of the land and the land's king from the person of Hebrew King Jesus and the teaching of the first apostles all of whom were Hebrews. We have lost sight of the *message* of Jesus by emphasizing only the last three days of his life as the great evangelist, Billy Graham taught! But clearly this message continued after Jesus' resurrection and was preached by the first apostles and even by Paul as the following passages indicate.

Acts 1:3. To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

History of the Christian Hope

Acts 8:12. But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts Chapter 14 [21] When they [Paul & Barnabas] had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, [22] strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:8. And he [Paul] entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Acts 20:25. And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I [Paul] have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.

Acts 28:23. When they had appointed a day for him [Paul], they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

Acts Chapter 28 [30] He [Paul] lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, [31] proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Colossians Chapter 1 [13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

History of the Christian Hope

Colossians 4:11. and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

I Thessalonians 2:12. we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

II Thessalonians Chapter 1 [5] This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— [6] since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

II Timothy 4:18. The Lord will rescue me [Paul] from every evil deed and [will] bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever.

The expression "his heavenly kingdom" does not mean a kingdom in the sky or in the spiritual realm. Kingdom was always understood by the Hebrews as meaning a kingdom on earth, the land of Canaan. What the references to heavenly kingdom mean is that God would set up this kingdom, without men doing it and that the government would be by God's anointed one, The Messiah. That's what kingdom of (or from) heaven meant to the Hebrews, the original audience: a kingdom of God's making, governed by God's king instead of a kingdom of man's making and of man's government.

It is by way of Calvinistic systematic theology in the 16th century that the kingdom became not one of Godly making on earth but one whose existence was in the spiritual realm only. This is the logical evolution of a Gentile anti-semitic attitude starting in the 2nd century when the church became almost exclusively Gentile. The Roman Catholic bishops and especially the Roman Emperor Constantine in the 4th century despised the Jews and tried to remove all Jewish references from their theology of the nature of the Savior. This idea was carried through the centuries until

History of the Christian Hope

it crystallized in John Calvin and a major influence in modern theology. However:

James 2:5. Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

II Peter Chapter 1 [10] Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. [11] For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

These references should make it clear that the first apostles continued to teach about the kingdom, a kingdom on earth, the land of Canaan to be specific. It is also clear that entering into the kingdom is a future Hope for modern born-again believers. But that begs the question, “Is this the identical Hope of the ancient Hebrews or is there some difference for us?” Indeed, there is a difference! Both the ancient Hebrews and even modern Jews hope for the kingdom on earth with the Godly anointed Messiah as the government. However, to them, their Hope is just to live there. They hope to be resurrected in the Promised Land and live in peace with God’s blessing. In fact, modern Jews refuse any participation in setting up this kingdom or participating in it in any way beyond just living there. They are not even willing to assign the title “The Messiah” until he has subdued all his enemies and the heavenly kingdom is fully established. Only then they will say, this is our kingdom and has come on earth with God’s Messiah on the throne.

Servants of the Most High

In all of Israel’s history, they are called *servants of God*. They lived to serve the Creator who will give them the Land of Promise: Canaan. They had no higher name or function before their Creator.

History of the Christian Hope

Daniel 6:20. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?

Malachi 4:4. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

Luke 1:69. and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

God's people are spoken of as servants even through the time of Jesus and even Jesus himself is also spoken of as a servant.

Luke 1:38. And Mary said, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

Luke Chapter 1 [54] He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, [55] as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

Mark's gospel is a whole book portraying Jesus as a servant. Why? Because he lived and ministered under the Mosaic Law when all of God's people, himself included, were God's servants. That Law had not been fully ratified until Jesus had completed his work. The result of that work was not fully completed until God poured out holy spirit on that great day of Pentecost, ten days after his ascension.

Acts 3:13. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

History of the Christian Hope

Acts Chapter 4 [29] And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, [30] while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

Old Covenant Passport: Entrance by Works

pass·port (Noun /'pas,pôrt/)

1. An official document issued by a government, certifying the holder's identity and citizenship and entitling them to travel under its protection to and from foreign countries.
2. A thing that ensures admission to or the achievement of something.

To enter the kingdom of God, one must have duly authorized credentials. Israel assumed their credentials to be their birthright, and that serving God by keeping the Law was their proof of owning a valid passport. This stamp of official spiritual governmental approval was gained, in their view, by their works as servants, keeping all the statutes of the Mosaic Law.

God gave Moses a set of Laws to His servants, at a time when Israel had lost much of its understanding of who God is and what He is, and their future Hope. Moses was starting from scratch to reteach Israel their servitude to God and their Hope of the land of Canaan, their kingdom on earth provided by God. As part of that Law, God gave the Hebrews symbols or copies of the spiritual so they could see their sinful state and God's standard of righteousness. They were given the symbols of the price to be paid to attain to God's righteousness which would qualify them for entrance into the Promised Land.

The apostle Paul sums up the Law in his great legal treatise, the book of Romans.

History of the Christian Hope

Romans Chapter 2 [12] For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. [13] For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

It is plain and simple, those who lived under the Law, will be judged by the Law and justified by their works of doing the Law.

Romans 3:19. Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

This Law of ordinances and commandments was in effect until such time as the price for sin was paid and a new covenant could be established. This fundamental and legal principle is missed by nearly all of modern Christian thinkers: The Law was in effect until the price for man's redemption was *fully* paid and a new contract initiated (see Hebrews, chapter 8). The benefit of the redemption price was not bestowed upon mankind until the day of Pentecost when the promise of the Father came as evidenced by speaking in tongues, speaking languages unknown to the men speaking. This miracle was witnessed by thousands of Jews at Pentecost in Jerusalem.

Jesus was asked which of the Commandments (out of 613 of them!) was the greatest? He responded by summarizing all the Law and commandments:

Matthew Chapter 22 [36] Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? [37] And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

And again, a similar question, "Which is the most important?"

History of the Christian Hope

Mark Chapter 12 [29] Jesus answered, The most important is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

This is the first lesson for all Jewish youth even today, “Hear O Israel, The Lord our God is One Lord.” It is from this ancient Hebrew creed that Judaism even today is adamantly monotheistic. Following that is the next great lesson for all Jewish youth, both ancient and modern and stated by Jesus, the Hebrew Rabbi:

Mark 12:31. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

Keeping the Law was the path of righteousness to the ancient Hebrews, which then qualifies one to enter into the kingdom of God. There is no relationship in this view, it is just a ritual qualification process, if not easy it was at least believed to be doable.

Mark 10:25. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

This view was predicated on a concept of that the Laws of conduct written in scripture was salvation. Jesus confronted that idea as part of his ministry to reteach Israel concerning The Messiah. But Jesus added a forgotten dimension: a relationship with his Father, the Creator. It is not the Law and scriptures that contain the way into the kingdom but it provided knowledge of a relationship with the Creator through the Messiah.

John 5:39. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

The ancient Hebrews thought it was their birthright to have their own nation with their own king but Jesus continually spoke of a relationship with his Father. This was foreign thinking to Hebrews drilled in the kingdom message. In their understanding, acceptance to enter the kingdom didn't depend on a relationship with the Father but depended on

History of the Christian Hope

faithfulness to the commandments of the Law thinking therein was salvation. Salvation by works was their obsession.

Jesus' mission was to correct this, to refocus their attention to faith in the Messiah who was present before them and proclaim that through him alone one could gain a relationship with the Father above. A restored relationship with the Creator through his Messianic Agent was salvation, not servitude to a set of rules even as he said:

[KJV] John 14:6. Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

This message heralds back to the original Paradise where there was a relationship with the Creator. Disobedience cost Adam and Eve Paradise, the loss of Paradise was only a symptom of the lost relationship! Breaking trust by disobedience destroyed the relationship and this was their error. Loosing Paradise was a consequence. This fact was largely lost on Israel. Jesus' mission was the restoration of the original message. Relationship!

He further qualified the relationship by telling Nicodemus that obtaining the spirit of God was the key to entrance into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus missed the concept at first but Jesus didn't give up on him but continued to teach him. Nicodemus was a humble follower.

Jesus taught that inheriting the kingdom (a.k.a. inheriting eternal life) was not a Hebrew birthright or dependent on works of the Law but dependent on a relationship with the Creator through himself. Faith in the Messiah Jesus was the requirement for inheriting eternal life.

Further, entrance into the kingdom required being born-again (text reads: born from above) of God's spirit.

[KJV] John 3:3. Jesus answered him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again [from above] he cannot see the kingdom of God.

History of the Christian Hope

Later in the story of the gospel of God, the first apostles revealed how becoming born of spirit was possible, even the right and natural outcome of the preaching of the kingdom's Messiah and belief in him.

Paul also taught that expressing that spirit was proof positive of our agency to represent God. He also taught that this was proof of ownership of the passport to enter the kingdom of God. Further, expressing holy spirit is the method and tools to expand and to improve the quality of the Body of Christ. While it is not necessary to manifest holy spirit in this world to own the passport or minister to the saints, it is certainly a major factor in ministering to God's elect and to be able to frequently reaffirm one's passport to the kingdom!

The Day of the Lord

There is much confusion among Christians concerning God's judgment of man, His wrath and our final fate. Some think we suffer at God's hand now and in the future. Others blame God's enemy (and ours), the adversary for our current suffering but still expect severe judgment in the future. Still others believe we are subject to the adversary's wrath now but are exempt from any future wrath from the Almighty later. Clearly, not everyone can be right!

The notion that God will judge mankind is not hard to discover in scripture. It is a frequent theme especially with the prophets of old as they prophesied against Israel. Paul summarizes this in his legal treatise in Romans when he explains the whole picture of wrath and righteousness in a few words:

Romans Chapter 3 [21] But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— [22] the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

History of the Christian Hope

Paul's expression, "apart from the Law" means that the old Law had been superseded but that doesn't mean that God stopped being objective in His judgment of what is and is not righteousness. Sin existed prior to the Law, whether one was aware of it or not. The Law made one aware of the need for redemption. The simple judgment is that "*all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*" but there is a reprieve from the negative judgment of God. For someone to skip the consequences of unrighteousness, only faith in Messiah Jesus is required. The righteousness of God and salvation was manifested, not in the Law but apart from it in the person of Jesus Christ. Paul states however, that the Prophets of old did witness that God's anointed one would come and what he would do. The phrase in verse 24 clearly indicates that Jesus paid the price required to buy us back from the adversary's possession to deliver us into God's investment portfolio. This is stated again in another place.

Colossians Chapter 1 [13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

And another place.

I Thessalonians 1:10. and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

The fact that believing on Messiah avoided the wrath to come was the first message he delivered in his home town of Nazareth. Here is that story:

Luke Chapter 4 [16] And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. [17] And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, [18] The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent

History of the Christian Hope

me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, [19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. [20] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. [21] And he began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

When you check Jesus' quote from the Hebrew scriptures you find that he divided it in a very interesting way.

Isaiah 61:2. to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

Jesus clearly split the “*year of the Lord's favor*” as being separate from the “*Day of Vengeance.*” Just because Christians, by faith in the Messiah, have managed to avoid the negative judgment of unrighteousness, and the wrath to come, doesn't mean that God will not judge others by His own standards or that the conduct, life style and attitudes of Christians will be ignored!

The expression, “*the day of the Lord*” is a common way the prophets spoke of God's judgment when wrath and vengeance it meted out on mankind. It can be found in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and Malachi. Isaiah describes it the way all the ancients understood it.

Isaiah 13:9. Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.

Jeremiah also used the expression in foretelling of God's judgment on Egypt.

Jeremiah 46:10a. That day is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, to avenge himself on his foes. ...

History of the Christian Hope

When the New Testament writers refer to this Day, they also understand it in the same way as the prophets of old understood it. It is a day when God's judgment is meted out on unrighteousness. But, some Christians believe that when Paul speaks of it, he is saying Christians will experience this wrath forgetting the truth of our deliverance from it as foretold by Jesus and written by Paul, quoted in I Thessalonians above.

The New Testament description of this day, has been have falsely applied to Christians.

I Thessalonians 5:2. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

Oh the sermons built to scare the congregations into right behavior based on this, but in the same context, just two verses later comes this:

I Thessalonians 5:4. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

We know about this awful day and we are not asleep but awake. Being taken by surprise is not our destiny! Likewise, the judgment of that day is not our destiny either.

I Thessalonians Chapter 5 [9] For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation [rescue] through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. [11] Therefore encourage one another and build one another up ...

The fact that we, as redeemed Believers, avoid the wrath of the Day of the Lord is an encouragement. Now here is the key that explains how we avoid the wrath or vengeance to come:

II Thessalonians Chapter 2 [1] Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to

History of the Christian Hope

him, we ask you, brothers, [2] not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.[emphasis mine]

The day of the Lord is still future. We avoid it by being gathered with our Lord prior to that judgment day. We will already be living in our new spiritual bodies, which is the poof of our righteous judgment. We have a new body because we have been previously judged worthy of it. We were judged worthy of eternal life when we believed upon the Messiah and received holy spirit. It is repeatedly proved every time we manifest holy spirit.

God's Big Secret

This is a very misunderstood concept in scripture. There is a spiritual reality so powerful, so dynamic, so earth shattering that God kept it hidden until it was a completed reality. It was so powerful that had not God kept it secret all through the ages, the Adversary would have changed his entire strategy and handling of Jesus Christ in an attempt to stop God's purpose in the salvation of mankind. This secret is also called a “mystery” for it was a hidden mystery until it was revealed. Once a thing that was hidden by God is revealed, it is no longer a mystery. The revealed thing now belongs to all of God's people.

Deuteronomy 29:29. The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever,

This mystery, this secret spiritual reality, was hidden until it was revealed to the apostle Paul. The truth was held within God Himself and was not revealed to anyone, not even Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ never spoke one word pertaining to this mystery! There is no comment in the gospel record concerning this mystery. Not one prophet ever spoke of it, not one word was ever uttered in reference to this secret, not one

History of the Christian Hope

metaphor, not one iota of a suggestion, not the slightest hint from Jesus or any of the prophets.

Romans Chapter 16 [25] Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages.

And in the King James Version:

Romans 16 [25] Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, [KJV]

This is either true or not. There is no middle ground. Either God kept it hidden or He didn't. Commentators today and through the centuries have not believed this truth. There are very few, even today, who understand the significance of this mystery. There are even fewer Christians today who are aware of it either for it is not taught in Bible Colleges, not taught in Seminaries and certainly not taught from pulpits or in Sunday Schools.

In the above quoted passages, strengthen and “stablish” are the same thing. The Greek text from which both versions are translated, uses a word meaning “*to resolutely set you on an unalterable path,*” as the King James Version translated it. This mystery has the potential power to set your mind and heart so firmly that you will be unmovable in your faith, completely equipped for faithfulness, without any wavering to the left or right.

No one can read very much of the Old Testament without reading how flaky Israel was in its history. One day they are all for God, the next day gone with the wind. They blew hot and cold. Indeed, if Israel had been very faithful, most of the prophets would have had very little to say. But this hidden mystery, this secret, is so powerful, that the wavering of Israel

History of the Christian Hope

need not be the conduct of the Christian. If this secret were understood today, there would be no such thing as any sermons on “back sliding” or calls for Christians to return to their faith. It is to the shame of modern Christian leaders that they do not establish their congregations with the knowledge of this formerly hidden wisdom.

This mystery was so powerful that had the Adversary known it, he never would have motivated the religious authorities of Israel to crucify the Lord Jesus Christ!

I Corinthians Chapter 2 [7] But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. [8] None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

It couldn't be plainer. God kept the secret so well that not even the angels, the adversary or any spirit in his entire kingdom knew of this. If God kept it from the entire angelic and spirit kingdom, then is it revealed anywhere in scripture before the apostle Paul revealed it? Absolutely not! It is not in the Old Testament and not in the gospels, not one word of it! This mystery belongs to and pertains to exclusively to the post-Pentecost believers.

Before revealing this formerly hidden wisdom I wish to set the context of this revelation. The apostle Paul was writing to the Corinthian church. He had this to say about their spiritual maturity level:

I Corinthians Chapter 3 [1] But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. [2] I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,

This mystery was revealed to infantile believers to help mature them. He taught it to a congregation with many problems, such as following men's ministries, which causes divisions in the congregation. He

History of the Christian Hope

considered the things of God which had been kept secret, but now revealed, as part of his infantile message to an immature church. How much below infantile is the church today who do not even know the most basic message preached by the apostles?

Lest we prolong this any further, Paul plainly states what is this mystery in another place. In the book we call Ephesians, which is a book well known to have been distributed not just in Ephesus but throughout all the churches in the first century. In this book, Paul makes it plain that he received knowledge of this mystery by revelation, not by man.

Ephesians Chapter 3 [3] how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. [4] When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, [5] which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. [6] This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Anything written before the time of the revelation of this mystery does not contain it. This mystery is that a new congregation of God's people was forming, new congregation made up of a new kind of believer: a spirit carrying believer. The Jews had always known of the promise of the kingdom to them and that Gentiles could join their faith as outsiders but this new congregation contained Jews and Gentiles *as equal members!* This was the new message: both Jews and Gentiles are equal inheritors with Christ. In many places in the post-Pentecost inspired writings of the apostles, this new congregation is called, "the Body of Christ." This is not a comparative figure of speech like the figures of marriage used to make comparisons to believers and Christ. It is not a metaphor. It is repeatedly stated as a pragmatic fact, this new congregation's name is: *The Body of Christ.*

This mystery is stated in another way in a different place:

History of the Christian Hope

Colossians Chapter 1 [26] the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. [27] To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

This mystery is our Hope of the glory to come in the coming new age, our passport to the kingdom. Now for the part that had to be kept locked away in the Father, locked away from the whole spiritual kingdom: Christ In You.

It was plenty bad for Satan and his cohorts to have the Son of God walking the earth revealing him and knocking his works out of commission. Satan was angry enough to have him killed by motivating the religious rulers to scheme up a way to have him crucified by the Romans.

Satan thought he had rid himself of Jesus with his all powerful spirit of God in him. But on the day of Pentecost, Satan saw Jesus' spirit being gifted upon not one man but upon thousands! Before that day was finished, over 3,000 Sons of God were on the scene! This was a major disaster from his point of view! He got rid of one, only to shortly discover over 3,000 men bearing that same powerful spirit. If he had any idea that was going to happen, he never would have had Jesus killed. Today he has millions of Jesuses to contend with! And more and more Jesuses just keep coming and coming. What an ongoing disaster for Satan!

New Covenant Passport: Entrance by Grace

Understanding what Jesus did in his ministry, finishing with his sacrifice, is a study that might be more appreciated by attorneys than most people for it is a legal transaction to establish a new contract between God and men. This story is told in two fashions in the New Testament. Romans is a legal treaties where logic is used to develop the process from the old

History of the Christian Hope

contract to the new. Hebrews is the same story but Hebrew history is used to develop the transition from the old to the new. Both methods of telling the story need to be understood.

That there is a transition from an old covenant to a new covenant is a major topic of the New Testament book of Galatians. It clearly presents the case that the old covenant had a weakness: the old passport by works could not qualify to enter into the kingdom. The old covenant actually makes the case that a new covenant is needed, a new one that works.

Galatians Chapter 2 [15] We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; [16] yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

And further explained:

Galatians Chapter 3 [10] For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them. [11] Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for The righteous shall live by faith. [12] But the law is not of faith, rather The one who does them shall live by them. [13] Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree— [14] so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Now we are back to the blessing of Abraham. We are back to the original covenant given to Abraham of the Promise of the Land to him and his descendants. Paul makes himself clear that this promise is no longer the possession of Israel exclusively but also a Promise and possession of Gentiles as well through belief in the Messiah Jesus.

History of the Christian Hope

Galatians Chapter 3 [23] Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. [24] So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. [25] But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,

It should be obvious that to transition to a new contract between God and men it needs to be executed by an agent, a duly authorized person to act in God's behalf. The development of a new contract, a new covenant has two parts: 1) the agent acting in behalf of God and 2) the covenant itself with its new provisions.

The first part introduces the "Hebrew concept of Agency." I will quote modern Jewish Law which retains the ancient custom:

A person's agent has the same status as that person himself, and an act of the agent, including his knowledge and intent, binds or entitles, as the case may be, the principal.

<http://www.hanner.co.il/Israel-Lawyers/Israel-Laws/Israel-Agency-Law.htm>

... A basic concept in the Talmud is that "a man's agent is as himself," i.e., that a man is bound by the acts of his duly constituted agent as if he himself had acted.

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0001_0_00524.html

It is by agency that Jesus made statements, quizzical to Western ears, but clearly understood by the original Hebrew audience (even if they didn't accept it). The original audience understood that an agent acts in the name of the Principle and may be regarded and spoken to as the Principle himself. Indeed, the agent can even speak in the first person as though he were the Principle! Agency will clear any misunderstanding of many statements made by Jesus which are not understood by modern commentators who have plucked these statements out of their cultural setting. This is the whole context of John 10:22 – 38 where Jesus is being interrogated by the Jews as to his authority to say and do what he did.

History of the Christian Hope

Jesus' equality with God was not a statement of the make up of his flesh as Western commentators think, but it was a statement of his authority as God's agent to represent Him.

In a prayer, Jesus makes some startling claims about his agency:

John Chapter 17 [2] since you have given him [your son] authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ... [4] I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

This is exactly the Hebrew concept of agency: authority conferred to accomplish an assigned task. By carrying out his agency, and completing his work, God was glorified!

John 17:6a. I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.

Jesus rehearses to his Principle (the Father) how well he carried out his responsibility which God assigned him as His agent. He spoke and acted in the name of the Principle only, not his own words or will but exclusively his Principle, the Father of Jesus Christ.

John 17:12. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

John Chapter 17:26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Even the statements of “You in me” and “I in them” are statements of agency. It describes the bond and unity of the Agent with his Principle.

History of the Christian Hope

The second part of establishing a new contract covenant is the new provisions, which supersede the old. This is a fundamental concept of all governmental systems based upon laws. A law cannot be deleted or eliminated but it can be superseded by a replacement law. That a new covenant was coming someday should not have surprised the Hebrews since the prophet Jeremiah had foretold of it.

Jeremiah Chapter 31 [31] Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ... [33] But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [34] And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The old law was not to be eliminated but superseded by placing it within God's people. This prophesy was quoted in Hebrews.

Hebrews Chapter 8 [10] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ... [13] In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The old law did not disappear but was made obsolete with a replacement. Hebrews 9:1-10 (written by the apostle Paul) explains the provisions of the old law with a high priest being God's agent to atone for sin through the sacrifices and ceremonies of the tabernacle and later through the Temple. Verse 11 of the same chapter starts the explanation of the shift to the new law, the replacement. It begins with the Messiah Jesus replacing the high priest. Then it goes on to explain that Jesus' sacrifice

History of the Christian Hope

replaces the sacrifices and ceremonies of the old law. Then you have the great statement of Jesus' agency to mediate the new covenant issuing in completing the Promise of Eternal Life.

Hebrews 9:15. Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

The rest of the chapter further explains Jesus' substitution for various parts of the old covenant. But what if the audience is not Jewish and does not have a full understanding of the legalities of the old contract? Paul has another letter explaining the new covenant to those with little Hebrew background. Paul wrote Romans to these people. He starts at the very beginning of the gospel of God just like we did in this essay, and explains man's need for a redeemer and man's slavery to unrighteousness. Even in this Paul must allude to the old law to explain sin as perpetual separation from communion with God.

However, for this audience of limited background, he equates this problem to man's nature: godlessness.

He then goes on to explain a new law, a law of the spirit.

Romans Chapter 8 [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Paul explains to this audience that the old law, the old contract, was not annulled but fulfilled or "ratified." This new law of the spirit supersedes

History of the Christian Hope

the old law of constant sin awareness. It is a provision of this new law that we are freed from the old unto a new relationship.

Romans Chapter 8 [13] For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba! Father! [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Living by this new law of the spirit, introduces a new relationship, not of “Servants to the Almighty” but that of family, “Sons of the Almighty.” This new law transforms God's people from servants to sons by adoption.

Paul's use of the term “adoption” is no accident or casual remark. In Romans, Paul is speaking primarily to persons living in Rome, under Roman law. Adoption is a special feature of Roman law. A natural son could be disowned by his father if he displeased him by his conduct ... or lack. However, an adopted son was a matter of choice, not an accident of birth. Therefore an adopted son could not be disowned! No matter what an adopted son did, his adoptive parents could not disown him ... ever! What Paul is saying is that this new law of the spirit was binding on both God and His adoptive sons. Neither can annul the status of sons! It's permanent. This is a provision of the new law: permanent adoption as sons of God. This new law or new contract was executed by God's agent, the Messiah Jesus. Jesus paid the redemption price for man as prophesied long before Israel was a nation. Jesus became the high priest and paid by himself the real price just as the priests did by symbols under the old law. That freed up man to live for God and opened the door for adoption into the spiritual family of God. It is by spirit that mankind partakes of the tree of life and gains perpetual life.

History of the Christian Hope

But there still is a problem with entering into the kingdom of God.

I Corinthians Chapter 15 [50] I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

We are still mortal having these flesh and blood bodies which cannot enter into the kingdom of God. We have a seal of our qualification, but we are stuck on the outside with this mortal body.

II Corinthians Chapter 1 [21] And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, [22] and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

II Timothy 2:19a. But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: The Lord knows those who are his, ...

We therefore have a Hope that this mortal will put on immortality so that we can enter into the kingdom of God. Again, Paul's explains our expectation for a new spiritual body:

I Corinthians Chapter 15 [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. [51] Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [53] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

It should be noticed that we're talking about the kingdom of God and not heaven. Heaven is a place where future rewards are kept. This is another notion from Hebrew thinking:

Matthew 5:12a. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven...

History of the Christian Hope

Colossians 1:5a. because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

I Peter Chapter 1 [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Heaven is a spiritual place where our inheritance and rewards are stored and guarded until both are finally revealed as Peter clearly states. Nowhere in scripture exists the teaching that when you die, you go to heaven although in most pagan cultures this theology exists. It was a fervent obsession of the Egyptians. This is a facet of paganism that has been adopted by Christianity and does not derive from scripture nor has it any place in the gospel of God. Christians have confused heaven with the kingdom of God. In fact, this teaching of heaven denies the truth of the resurrection of the saints! What point is there for Jesus to return if everyone is living in heaven now? None! Teaching that the saints go to heaven is pure paganism, not Jewish nor Christian and not biblical. The first apostles would have denied it.

Paul even warned against such talk in speaking of two men who were denying the resurrection using a different doctrine. Denying the resurrection is veering off from truth.

II Timothy 2:18. who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.

We especially look forward to entering into the kingdom, the new age, at some future date since we are sealed with holy spirit knowing that our rewards and inheritance are secure. We await only the necessary change of our bodies to a spiritual body so we can participate in the new age, the new Jerusalem at the end of history.

We also know that this new information about our standing as sons of God was only revealed by the apostles, in the post-Pentecost age, also

History of the Christian Hope

known as the age of grace. All learning prior to this revelation is for learning but not direct application. We live a new age.

Romans 15:4. For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Inheritors and Joint-Heirs of the Kingdom

Those qualified to enter into the kingdom of God in the New Earth and New Heavens, aka The New Age or The Regeneration have a another special name: New Israel. The transition from the old to the new is explained in the book of Galatians where the nature of the denizens of the New Age (Kingdom of God) are described also.

Galatians Chapter 3 [28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [29] And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, [seed] heirs according to promise.

In this New Age, the distinctions of “Jew,” “Greek” (non-Jewish) are washed away because these are distinctions applicable to this world and this life only. Further the distinction of employer and employee (to use modern terms) are eliminated. Even so basic a concept as gender vanishes in the quote above. Rather, all the denizens of the coming kingdom are called Abraham's seed and inheritors of the kingdom without any reference to any former earthly status.

But there is a special relationship at work here as we discussed in the previous section. This special relationship is that of being God's family. To repeat a previously quoted passage with a new significance:

Romans Chapter 8 [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with

History of the Christian Hope

Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Other translations offer additional insight:

Romans 8:17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. [King James Translation]

Romans 8:17. and if children, also heirs, heirs, indeed, of God, and heirs together of Christ--if, indeed, we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together. [Young's Literal Translation]

We, as children of God, called Sons of God, inherit not just to exist in the land but to share equally with the Messiah's inheritance. This inheritance is not divided out as co-inheritors but all equally share: joint-inheritors. Everything is in common with everyone, no distinctions.

When the Saints Come Marching In

The day of wrath and judgment called the Day of the Lord is still future. The key to avoiding the day of judgmental wrath is this: Prior to the day of judgment, there is a “gathering” of the body of Christ, a changing and resurrection of God's elect into a new spiritual body. That is, we are gathered up to be with our Lord BEFORE this day comes, both the living and the dead saints! We don't participate in the wrath! Some Christians call this the *Rapture*, using a non-biblical word. Biblically this is called “The Gathering” as the previously quoted verse says, “*Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him.*” Paul explains this in another place.

I Corinthians Chapter 15 [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made

History of the Christian Hope

alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

This short passage contains so much truth. Firstly, a connection is made to the first man and the second. In the second, all are made alive but it is not the same event for everyone. There is an order to it, a sequence to becoming alive again. By simple inference from language, if there is a “firstfruits” there must be a second. There is and it is the spirit-bearing Believers. We are with Jesus Christ *before the end*. Continuing the passage above:

[24] Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

This gathering up of the saints solves the problem of our mortal bodies not being able to inherit the kingdom of God.

I Corinthians Chapter 15 [51] Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

This is not called a “resurrection,” in this passage to emphasize the nature of the event, (this same event is later called a resurrection in Revelation 20, where the discussion is not about the living but the dead in Christ). It is called a gathering, for not all believers will be dead in this discussion. For the alive believers, their bodies are changed into a form like Jesus' resurrected body. One needs only look at the records of Jesus after his resurrection to discover a few things about it, if you're curious.

This truth is also described in another place where it is even more clear as to what will happen at the Gathering.

History of the Christian Hope

I Thessalonians Chapter 4 [13] But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. [15] For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. [16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Notice it is not called a resurrection here either to emphasize the hope of the living at Christ's return. The gathering is an event that occurs "in the air." This is not Jesus stepping foot on Zion to establish his kingdom, it is a grand reunion of all of the saints, a gathering up of the whole assemble of the redeemed, just prior to setting foot on mount Zion. It is a reunion with the first one made alive, with all his own, a gathering of the whole Body of Christ that takes place in the clouds. We, as believers in the Messiah Jesus, and possessors of holy spirit, have already been judged as righteous. That's why we can join in the reunion of all the saints when Jesus comes and calls us out. He calls us all at once, both the dead and the alive believers, all at once with a shout and gathers us up. The dead in Christ rise first and we who are alive at his coming immediately join the reunion.

This is the first part of the Christian Hope, the first event in our Hope: We will be gathered together with all other born-again saints with Jesus, the Messiah. We will avoid the wrath to come in this way because we, as spiritual beings, will not be affected by events taking place in the physical realm, not that we don't see them, we do.

There is a wrath coming which is prophesied by Daniel and referred to by Jesus when he summarized Daniel's prophesies. Some people think

History of the Christian Hope

Jesus gave new light about the end but he only summed up Daniel's prophecies. The only new light about end times was given *after* the out pouring of holy spirit on the day of Pentecost. New light about the spiritual future of mankind is only found in the writings of the first century apostles. Even then, some of their writings only repeat Daniel and other prophets of old.

But what then? If God has not ignored our lives, our faithfulness ... or lack. What of it? What good did it do me to suffer through the hard times and remain faithful? I made it to eternity did I? I was one of the saints who came marching into the kingdom. I arrived!

The Rewards of God

What good is faithfulness? Much in every way! Let us start with Jesus on this topic. He taught about the value of faithfulness to an audience still under the old Law because he had not ratified or fulfilled it as yet. He was still correcting the Hebrew thinking from birthright and salvation by works of the Law to a relationship with the Father so faithfulness to the Father was a pertinent topic. To repeat a look at Matthew 5.

Matthew Chapter 5 [11] Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This passage tells of great reward for Old Testament believers still under the Law who are withstanding the evil meted against them. Notice too, through the eyes of a Hebrew, that it does not say that you go to heaven and get your rewards but that heaven is the repository for your rewards. In Hebrew thinking, that mean that God is keeping the score, He is noting the rewards due you but keeping them in Himself, storing them up for you later. The apostle Paul also addresses this topic for the born again believer too. The context is what you are doing, who or what you are following.

History of the Christian Hope

I Corinthians 3:4. For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not being merely human?

Does this not sound like modern denominations? Does this not sound like people lauding men as great ones and aligning themselves to support and promote a man's ministry, his work and his church? That is indeed what he is talking about! It is a human characteristic to do this but it is not right.

I Corinthians Chapter 3 [7] So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. [8] He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. [9] For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

Lauding, supporting and dedicating your life and service to a man's ministry or to a man's organization (or charity) is a false foundation. If modern Christians were to actually believe this, every church would suddenly go completely empty! Christian ministries would suddenly find themselves without followers, supporters and their treasuries would soon be depleted. Their work would suddenly be taken up by everyone, not just a few who stand at the head of these man made institutions. And it clearly says, each will receive his wages according to his labor. Paul is quite clear about the value of this to repeat the quote again:

I Corinthians 3:7. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

They who head up these ministries and organizations are nothing. Why follow a nothing when there is no reward for it and it will not survive? There will be no evangelistic organizations in the kingdom of God. There will be no Christian church, no Christian service organization, no denominations, no Christian charities there. They will disappear altogether when Christ returns. If there is any reward for following them, it is a reward gained now but which rewards will also disappear later.

History of the Christian Hope

I Corinthians 3:14. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

Here he is talking about how you conduct your life. Do you follow a man's ministry or are you a "Generic Christian" exalting the Father through Jesus Christ only? Building a man's ministry is a foundation of wood, hay and stubble which will be burned up, it has no reward. But building upon a sure foundation of Jesus Christ alone is a foundation with reward. Likewise being purely motivated to build up the body of Christ as your only Christian duty has reward.

I Corinthians Chapter 9 [17] For if I do this [preaching the gospel] of my own will, I have a reward, but not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. [18] What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Paul has a right to be supported by his work of preaching the gospel but he chooses to not ask for support. Rather, he leaves this matter to each believer as he/she is led by the spirit. This is stated again in another place.

Colossians Chapter 3 [23] Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, [24] knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Again, the inheritance is one reward. But there's more.

Hebrews 11:6. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

This is one of the most fundamental beliefs we hold as Christian believers. We must believe that God exists and does give rewards. If not, let us party on and die young because without reward, there is no point in doing well in this life or even struggling for eight decades. But what if we

History of the Christian Hope

each adopted the responsibility of building up the body of Christ, unassociated with doing it through a man's ministry? What if we each endeavored to proclaim the name of Jesus and his salvation? What if we were all, each and everyone, to do this and brought others into this grace where in we stand? In this work is reward, not by following another who gets his reward for it but by doing it ourselves. Then there is a reward for ourselves stored up to be received later.

I Thessalonians Chapter 2 [19] For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? [20] For you are our glory and joy.

What if we stood faithful for our whole lives? What if we fought off the adversary's pressures against us but never gave in? We could expect to be rewarded just like Paul's expectation.

II Timothy Chapter 4 [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

And again.

James 1:12. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Is anyone counting the “crowns?” And just how good is a God given crown as a reward?

Hebrews 2:9a. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor ...

A crown as a reward is as good as it gets! When we see Jesus in the clouds, we can expect some compensation for our faithfulness and efforts

History of the Christian Hope

in the form of a crown of glory, like unto the glory God bestowed upon Jesus as his reward. Our rewards are right up there in the category of rewards given to the Messiah!

I Peter 5:4. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Revelation of John 2:10b. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Revelation of John 3:11b. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

These rewards are what we look for. What they actually represent is not clear such as a “crown of glory” but the rewards are ours based on our faithfulness in this life.

Too many Christians reduce themselves to the status of servants by thinking that just to gain eternity or to gain everlasting life is the goal. That is not the goal but just the first step. We were assured eternal life and entrance into the kingdom, when the Christian received holy spirit. Christians are pre-judged as righteous and consequently called “Sons of God.” But, rewards are a different thing and are dependent on our ability to be faithful to respond to God's call each and every day of our lives.

Collecting rewards is the goal of every eternity-bound Christian. It is a lifetime long process during which we have many short term rewards and suffer many evil things as well. We build up rewards, stored in our name in heaven by living faithfully in this life that we might be well rewarded in the new age.

New Age Jobs and Careers

Oddly, this question never comes up in Jewish thinking. To the ancient Hebrews, just being resurrected to live in the Promised Land under God's anointed was as far as they got. It never occurred to them that everlasting

History of the Christian Hope

life might get horribly boring with nothing to do so the question was never asked nor answered. Worse, the Jewish Hope is that the Messiah will single handedly fight off his enemies and establish the kingdom with its governmental headquarters located in the New Jerusalem, located in the Promised Land of Canaan. They expect this to happen without any assistance from them at all! They will not even acknowledge their Messiah until he has done all this on his own for them. Does not this sound like the children's story of the little red hen?

In this children's story, the pig, the duck and the cat refused to help the hen with planting seed, harvesting the crop and milling the crop for flour. The hen then made bread by herself also. But the pig, the duck and the cat expected to eat the bread. The hen turned them down and ate the bread all by herself. The point of the story is selfishness on the part of the pig, the duck and the cat. Is Israel any different? Who shall fight the enemies of the Lord? Messiah Jesus all by himself? Who will administer the government of the kingdom, Jesus all by himself? What's the point of being family if we don't act like family, stand up for one another and help one another?

God did think of this! The new covenant is all inclusive, not just for Israel. In fact the new covenant carries with it a new provision, a responsibility, for those whose faith is based on the Messiah Jesus, who are sealed by the holy spirit of promise. The beginnings of full inclusion with Christ is seen in some of Jesus' discussions with his apostles.

Matthew 19:28. Jesus said to them, Truly, I say to you, [Peter] in the new world [in the regeneration], when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you [the twelve] who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus promised his apostles that they would sit on the thrones of Israel's judgment. Paul reflected this but added all the saints in this office and role of judges.

History of the Christian Hope

I Corinthians Chapter 6 [1] When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? [2] Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? [3a] Do you not know that we are to judge angels?

In case you hadn't thought of it, thrones of judgment are a governmental function. Both Jesus and Paul indicated that the apostles and all other born-again saints are part of the government of the new age! One translation reflects this idea very clearly:

I Corinthians 6:2 Do you not know the saints are to manage the world? If the world is to come under your jurisdiction, are you incompetent to adjudicate upon trifles? [Moffatt translation: 1922]

We will judge the angels? Yes, we will pass judgment upon the rebellious host who first rebelled against God and continue to do so. I'm certainly ready to judge and sentence them for all they have done to me, my brothers in Christ and to all of mankind! But all this brings up a pertinent point: We as Believers are part of the government! But there is more.

This is part of our joint inheritance with Christ! Just as the Messiah totally represented God and spoke only as the Father directed, so also do we and in the new age. We not only joint-inherit but we joint-administrate. It's our responsibility as joint-inheritors and family. Whatever the Messiah must do, in all of it we participate as family, sharing responsibility.

The end of all things, the end of history does not occur until several matters are settled. The first is gathering the saints. The second is the Messiah, must put down and subdue all his enemies. He does this during his reign, during the time of his kingdom on earth.

History of the Christian Hope

I Corinthians Chapter 15 [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. [24] Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

This verse does not mean that destroying every rule, every authority and every power is quick or easy. Rather, the Messiah reigns until this has happened. This reign and our participation in it can be seen in the last book of prophesy.

Revelation of John Chapter 20 [2]And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, [3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. [4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Those qualified to reign with Christ have already been identified as the joint-inheritors with him, namely the born-again believers, the Body of Christ. The passage quoted here only restates that fact but points out another important fact: The Gathering of the Saints occurs at the *beginning* of the thousand year reign of the Messiah. The Gathering is not the Day of the Lord where judgment is meted out. That day occurs at the end of the thousand year reign of the Messiah. So what is the point of the thousand year reign of the Messiah? It is the time of taking over the

History of the Christian Hope

management of the world. It is a time that all the nations start to capitulate to God's king and give up their own sovereign rule. The thousand year reign is a time of consolidation of all authority and governments under God's Anointed. This includes economic systems also.

Satan is bound for a thousand years. During that time, the power of this world, the god of this world is held away from humankind. That will make for a world of chaos! Formerly, the nations have been ruled, both politically and economically by men under the influence of Satan. With him out of the picture, men will hardly know how to act or how to make decisions.

Enter the joint-inheritors of the kingdom! We who believed in the Messiah and have the spirit to prove it. They are already on the scene, a thousand years before Israel! We are helpers of this effort, even as we are helpers of salvation now, so then we will also be helpers of the final rescuing of the nations. We will step in and administer effectively, representing the Messiah where Satan has misled and men have failed.

Revelation of John Chapter 20 [1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. [2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, [3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

It should be obvious that this process is not instant! No, it takes a thousand years to complete it and even requires a great war at the end to finally put down all enemies. The ancient Hebrews had no concept of such a thing. To them, the Messiah appears by coming down from above, lands with his feet planted on Zion (the temple mount) and “instantly” does the kingdom on earth happen. The apostle John makes it very clear that this transition from man's rule of the earth to the Messiah's rule is not so miraculous or instant, it takes time and effort and we are helpers in that effort.

History of the Christian Hope

Revelation of John Chapter 20 [4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

These people are first apostles and the Body of Christ. Jesus promised the apostles, the ones he had chosen that they would judge Israel from twelve thrones. The born-again believers are promised positions of judgment and authority in the kingdom as joint-heirs with Christ. You can see in this reference that these are the people who are on the scene at the beginning of the thousand year reign of Christ.

Revelation of John Chapter 20 [5] (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. [6] Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Verse five is not punctuated as a parenthesis in any English version but it is in the sense of the reading of the text. Inserted is a brief explanation of when the rest of the dead arise. The summary of this event is that this first arising from the dead, before the thousand year reign of Christ is the Body of Christ. They are blessed in that these people will not participate in the final judgment, they will not even face the second death. Their fate was sealed with the holy spirit of promise long before the first resurrection. The second part of the summary clearly states our new career: Priests of God and of Christ.

At the end of this period, Satan is released from his prison and he will be furious! He will gather all of the forces he can to combat God's elect. Who will side with him? Ignorant men who will believe his lies, just like the first woman was deceived. Who might he be targeting? God's Messiah and his body of believers but we will have spiritual bodies and a thousand

History of the Christian Hope

years of experience representing the Messiah. Satan doesn't stand a chance of winning but he will try anyway.

So what does this new career of Priests mean? To start with, we will administrate judgment over the earth with the Messiah. We will administrate where needed for a thousand years. We will combat Satan and whoever he can muster to join his cause when he gets the chance at the end of the Jesus' thousand year reign. Once that is all over and Satan has lost, there will be a resurrection of all of mankind. There will be a judgment of what men have done, whether good or bad. There will be a reading of the records of men's lives and book of life will be opened. Those whose names appear will live and those whose name do not appear will not continue living. This is the second death (Revelation 20:14-15).

After this comes the great revealing of a new heaven and a new earth for the former will be passed away and the sea will be no more. (That makes room for a lot more people to live on the earth!) Even day and night will be obsolete with all light emanating from this new city. The new Jerusalem will be established with a river of life coming from the throne of God and the Lamb. On either side of this river grows the tree of life with its fruits of life and leaves of healing for all the nations.

It should be noted that if there is fruit and leaves for healing the nations, that nations of men must still exist. Indeed, the ones judged as just will live in the new age too. Our careers as Priests of God and Christ will continue as administrators in the kingdom of God. This did not end with the final judgment. We have not been retired! But in our new spiritual bodies, we have no need of daily rest, food or retirement. We have been made alive for the purpose of service, not as slaves or servants but the pleasure of serving the Creator as His children. We will continue to administrate life to the nations with Jesus for all eternity.

This is the Great Christian Hope!

Gospel of God Summary

The whole gospel of God might be summarized as a simple quest: Regaining a relationship with the Creator with the benefit of a return to Paradise.

The promise of one who would redeem man, become his Savior and restore this relationship was spoken to the Adversary who tricked man out of the relationship and their Godly living place. Adam and Eve were also aware of this promise of the Redeemer.

The benefit of a restored relationship was given to Abraham as a reward for believing the promise of God, a dwelling place, the Land of Canaan, later called the Kingdom of God or often just “The Kingdom.”

Please note: These promises were both given BEFORE Israel existed as a nation. Israel rose as a nation from the loins of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. The role of Redeemer and the promise of The Land to Abraham's descendants, predates both Israel and the Law!

The government of this land was promised to king David's house from which one would arise to establish an everlasting throne (rule). Therefore the Messiah had a dual role to fulfill: Redeemer and King.

The first time the Messiah appeared, he executed his first and primary role as Redeemer or Savior. But he was also The Messiah, Hebrew for The King, but he did not execute that role in his first coming. He did establish that he was God's Anointed. But he did not establish the throne of David, nor establish the Kingdom. Just as Jesus' first message in Nazareth split a passage in Isaiah, separating the *year of the Lord's favor* from the *day of vengeance of our Lord*, so also the Messiah split his work into two parts with his first work as Redeemer being completed in his first coming and his second work as King establishing the Kingdom of God upon his second coming when he returns as King of Kings, Lord of Lords.

History of the Christian Hope

God held within Himself a Big Secret about those who would believe on the Messiah after he completed his first work as Redeemer and Savior. God kept within Himself the good news that the Gentiles and Jews would be joint-heirs with His Messiah in The Kingdom. God kept this secret from not only mankind but from the angelic hosts ... all of them! That means that not a word or hint of this was breathed by anyone prior to the apostles proclaiming it in their post-Pentecost ministries.

God also did not disclose the full nature of pouring out His spirit upon mankind at the celebration of Pentecost after Christ's ascension until after it happened. Then it was disclosed by revelation to the first apostles that the spirit He gave was the same spirit that was upon Jesus himself. It is called "Christ in You the Hope of Glory." It is also called the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Jesus. That means that this spirit of which one can become reborn, provides the bearer the same power and stamp of authority that Jesus had in his ministry.

This spiritual stamp of authority is proof positive of our Agency to represent God on earth as Jesus did when he walked the earth and proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom. Just as he did with power and authority, so can we! Manifesting this spirit is also our spiritual tool to carry out the proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom and prove it with signs, miracles and wonders, just as the first apostles did.

This spirit is also our guaranteed passport into the Kingdom when the gates open for us. We are sealed with the promise of the Father that these things are true and permanent.

Romans 11:29. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

At such time as mans history ends, we will be transformed and clothed with a spiritual body, whether dead or alive, with which to continue to represent God in blessings and judgment. Eventually God will establish a new age containing a new dwelling place, called the new city of Jerusalem for all His people to dwell in everlasting life.

History of the Christian Hope

We will all partake of the tree of life. And so we shall always and forever be with our Lord and God!!

This is the Great Christian Hope!