

Last lesson we looked at Paul's 14 epistles and noticed how they fell into two distinct groups dispensationally. If you would like the last lesson or any previous editions, please email.

Today we examine a great blinding and regrettably abiding tradition which holds sway in the Christian community world-wide. This tradition is that Pentecost of Acts 2 was the beginning of the "church" and it follows that the book of Acts was the account of the early history, or beginnings of the "church age".

This tradition is so firmly held that perhaps some of you will be shocked when we show that the period covered by the book of Acts is not the beginning of any new age, but in fact quite the opposite, the events of the entire book of Acts were events that took place during the ends of the ages.

It will take us too far a field to prove that Pentecost was never the "birthday of the church", and we will return to those Feasts studies as soon as possible, but for now let every reader be assured that Acts 2 was the fulfillment of a Feast given to Israel and is part of an unfolding of God's purposes for the world through the establishment of that great nation He promised unconditionally to Abraham (Gen.12:1-3). That great nation of Israel will be restored when Christ comes again to the earth and it is this return and restoration of the Kingdom the faithful expected during the Acts period.

For proof, here are some Scriptures we would like you to prayerfully consider which declare the Gospel and Acts period was the ends of the ages. These were given by God to a variety of New Testament writers but each clearly state that when they wrote an ending was in view, not a new beginning.

Hebrews 9:26 declares that our Lord appeared in the "end of the world .. to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (KJV). Modern versions bring the clarity of this word "world" to our eyes by translating the verse thus:

Heb 9:26 else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Up to and including His offering up of Himself, the Lord ministered during the ends of the ages, not the beginning of any "new church age".

Staying in Hebrews we read in chapter 10:37 that the return of the Lord was anticipated in a very little while:

Heb 10:37 For "yet a little while, and He who shall come will come and will not delay."

Heb 10:37 For "in a very little while the one who is coming will return and will not delay; (ISV).

John in his first letter chapter 2 verse 18, was inspired to say twice that it was the "last time" but the original word is "hour" and again, some modern versions bring this truth to light;

1Jo 2:18 Little children, it is the last hour. Just as you heard that an antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. This is how we know it is the last hour. (ISV).

James also said the coming of the Lord was near, a truth very relevant to the "end of the ages".

Jam 5:8 You also be patient, establish your hearts, for the coming of your Lord draws near.

Jam 5:9 Do not grudge against one another, brothers, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge stands before the door.

Peter likewise assures his readers that the "end of all things has drawn near".

1Pe 4:7 But the end of all things has drawn near. Therefore be of sound mind, and be sensible to prayers.

1Pe 4:7 The end of everything is near; so be sensible and clear-headed for the sake of your prayers. (ISV).

During those times the Apostle Paul wrote these things:

1Co 1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God given you in Jesus Christ,

1Co 1:5 that in everything you are enriched by Him, in all speech and in all knowledge;

1Co 1:6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you;

1Co 1:7 so that you come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1Co 1:8 He shall also confirm you to the end,

Paul wrote confidently to the Corinthians that they, not you and I today, would be confirmed to the end. In this context "the end" is the revelation (as in the book of the same name) of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The world order changes when the kingdoms of the world become His. The end Paul referred to was not the end of their lives, since he wrote that not all of them were going to die in chapter 15 verse 51. Paul and the Corinthians at that time would be confirmed to that coming of the Lord which had drawn near, and was in a very little while.

In this same letter we read these words by our Apostle:

1Co 10:11 And all these things happened to them as examples; and it is written for our warning on whom the ends of the world have come.

1Co 10:11 Now all these things happened to those people as examples, and they were written for our instruction, to whom the ends of the ages have come. (EMTV).

Upon Paul and the Corinthians the ends of the ages had arrived. At that time an ending was in view, not a beginning of a "new church age".

In the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians we read Paul's advice regarding marriage and his preference for the single option. Paul was writing at the ends of the ages, and the Lord's return was very imminent:

1Co 7:26 Then I think this is good, because of the present necessity; that it is good for a man to be so.

1Co 7:27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

1Co 7:28 But if you do marry, you did not sin; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But such shall have trouble in the flesh, but I spare you.

1Co 7:29 But this I say, brothers, The time is short. It remains that both those who have wives should be as not having one.

1Co 7:30 And they who weep are as though they did not weep. And they who rejoice are as though they did not rejoice. And they who buy are as though they did not possess.

1Co 7:31 And they who use this world are as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world is passing away.

Another modern version puts this last verse in an interesting way:

1Co 7:31 and those who use the things in the world as though they were not dependent on them. For the world in its present form is passing away.

It is fascinating to read Paul saying "the time is short", and those who had wives be as though they had none, the form of this world is passing away. "The present necessity" could well be understood by his exhortation of Acts 14:22 and a comparative reading of Matthew 24.

These Scriptures become clear when we accept the Word of God which plainly shows that at that time it was the end of the ages, not the beginning of anything.

It goes without saying that the world as it was then has continued unto this day, Paul and the Corinthians died. Something happened to change the status of "the ends of the ages" and the expected return of the Lord from those days to days future to our time. What was it that happened?

We hope to answer that question in our next email.

The answer is simple. The hope and "ends of the ages" of the Acts period were postponed at the end of the book of Acts when the nation of Israel was put aside for a time. Then the Lord descended and revealed to Paul alone the present dispensation of the grace of God which is a parenthesis. In the future, the divine purposes for Israel will be resumed and those "ends of the ages" will come to pass.