

“The Hope of Israel” in Paul’s Early Epistles vs. “That Blessed Hope” in Paul’s Latter Epistles



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Paul summarizes his early teaching ministry during the period of years covered by the book of Acts as *“the hope of Israel.”* His Roman imprisonment began with *“the hope of Israel”* by which he was *“bound with this chain”* (Acts 28:20), and ended with him as the prisoner of *“Jesus Christ for you the nations”* (Ephesians 3:1), and for *“the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds”* (6:19-20).

“The hope of Israel” is the subject of Old Testament prophecy, the Gospels, the epistles of Peter, James and John, the Book of Revelation, as well as the early epistles of Paul. *“The blessed hope”* of the Body of Christ is a part of the secret economy revealed only in Paul’s latter epistles. He who had been a *“New Covenant”* minister and heralded the *“Hope of Israel,”* became the minister of the *“Revelation of the Mystery”* and of Christ in the believer, *“the hope of glory.”*

Ike T. Sidebottom (1899-1970) wrote concerning this:

We must be careful not to confuse the hope and calling of Christ’s earthly inheritance, *“Israel,”* with the hope and calling of His heavenly inheritance, the present-day believers, the Body of Christ.

We must also be careful not to confuse the earthly glory that awaits Israel with the heavenly glory that awaits Christ’s Body. The following Scriptures will enlighten us concerning our position in Christ and Christ in us our *“hope of glory”* (Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 3:20-21; II Timothy 4:8).

During his Acts period ministry, Paul was bound with a chain for *“the hope of Israel”* (Acts 28:20), but immediately following his proclamation to the Jews in Acts 28:28, he was in bonds

for “*the mystery of the gospel*” (6:18-20). This means that, from the beginning of Paul’s ministry (Acts 9:20) to the setting aside of national Israel (Acts 28:28), a period of about twenty-one years, he suffered for Israelites; but after he had delivered God’s final appeal to Israel as a nation, he became a prisoner for the “Gentiles” (3:1).¹

PAUL’S EARLY AND LATTER EPISTLES

The hope (or expectation) presented by Paul in his early epistles is identical to that presented to Israel in their Circumcision writings. It is a hope of their resurrection and the re-establishment of their kingdom, all associated with the Second Coming of Christ.

Paul closed his ministry in the time period covered by the book of Acts by plainly stating,

*For **the hope of Israel** I am bound with this chain (Act 28:20).*

*For on account of **the expectation of Israel** this chain is lying about me (Concordant).*

In Paul’s early epistles, written during this period covered by the book of Acts, we can see clearly that “*the hope of Israel*” was indeed the expectation that he presented.

In Paul’s latter epistles he reveals “*the administration of the secret*” (Ephesians 3:9), and as a result a higher hope, and one that will precede “*the Hope of Israel*” (i.e., a pre-expectant² hope) which he calls “*that Blessed Hope*” (i.e., *that Happy Expectation*³) which takes place at Christ’s appearing in the celestials.

*When Christ, Who is our life, shall **appear**, then shall ye also **appear** with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).*

*Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious **appearing** of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).*

“THE HOPE OF ISRAEL” ANTICIPATES THE “COMING” OF JESUS CHRIST

The COMING of the Son of Man be ... And they shall see the Son of Man COMING in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:27, 30)

In his early epistles Paul also anticipated the “*Coming*” of Christ.

*So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1:7).*

*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord **come**, who both will bring to light the*

1. *The Fellowship of the Mystery: A Study if the Book of Ephesians.*

2. Ephesians 1:12 (Concordant Version).

3. Titus 2:13 (Concordant Version).

hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God (I Corinthians 4:5).

*They that are Christ's at His **coming** (I Corinthians 15:23).*

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His **coming**? (I Thessalonians 2:19).*

*To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints (I Thessalonians 3:13).*

*For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the **coming** of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep (I Thessalonians 4:15).*

*The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 5:23).*

*When He shall **come** to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe because our testimony among you was believed in that day (II Thessalonians 1:10).*

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him (II Thessalonians 2:1).*

*Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His **coming** (II Thessalonians 2:8).*

On the other hand, Paul does not mention the “Coming” of Christ anywhere in his latter epistles.

“THE HOPE OF ISRAEL” ANTICIPATES THE “REVELATION” OF JESUS CHRIST

*Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is **revealed** (Luke 17:30).*

In his early epistles Paul also anticipated the “Revelation” of Christ.

*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be **revealed** from heaven with His mighty angels II Thessalonians 1:7).*

On the other hand Paul does not mention the “revelation” (or “unveiling”) of Christ anywhere in his latter epistles.

“THE HOPE OF ISRAEL” HAS JESUS CHRIST COMING “IN THE CLOUDS”

*They shall see the Son of Man coming **in the clouds** of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30).*

In his early epistles Paul also anticipated that Christ would come “*in the clouds.*”

*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them **in the clouds**, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:17).*

On the other hand Paul does not mention Christ coming in “clouds” anywhere in his latter epistles.

“THE HOPE OF ISRAEL” ANTICIPATES THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE CLOUDS AND WITH A “TRUMPET”

*He shall send His angels with a **great sound of a trumpet** ... (Matthew 24:31).*

In his early epistles Paul also anticipated that Christ would come with the sound of a “*trumpet.*”

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound** ... (I Corinthians 15:52).*

*For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with **the trump** of God ... (I Thessalonians 4:16).*

On the other hand Paul does not mention “trumpets” anywhere in his latter epistles.

“THE HOPE OF ISRAEL” ANTICIPATES THE TRUMPET ACCOMPANYING THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST AND IS AT THE “LAST TRUMP”

***immediately after the tribulation** of those days ... He shall send His angels with a **great sound of a trumpet** ... (Matthew 24:29, 31).*

In his early epistles Paul also anticipated that Christ would come at the “*last trump.*”

*... At **the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (I Corinthians 15:52)*

In Paul’s early epistles he taught that the coming of Christ would take place at a specific time, “*at the last trump.*” The last trump means that there are earlier trumps. If this were somehow a special “last trump” which is supposedly distinctly for the Body of Christ, where are the preceding ones? According to Revelation chapters 8-11 there will be a series of seven trumpets blown prior to the Second Coming of Christ. Interestingly enough, at the seventh and final trumpet (or last trump) recorded in Revelation 11:15, there is a resurrection of Israel’s saints. At that time these saints are also judged and rewarded (:15-18).

**“THE HOPE OF ISRAEL” ANTICIPATES THE SECOND COMING
OF JESUS CHRIST TO BE ACCOMPANIED WITH
“GLORY” AND “POWER”**

*And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with **power** and great **glory** (Matthew 24:30).*

In his early epistles Paul also anticipated that Christ would come with “power” and “glory.”

*Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the **glory** of his **power** (II Thessalonians 1:9).*

On the other hand, Paul does not mention such a demonstration anywhere in his latter epistles.

**“THE HOPE OF ISRAEL” ANTICIPATES THAT THE
SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST WOULD BE
ACCOMPANIED BY “WRATH”**

*And the seventh angel sounded ... and Thy **wrath** is come ... (Revelation 11:15, 18).*

In his early epistles, Paul also anticipated that “wrath” would accompany Christ’s coming.

*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In **flaming fire taking vengeance** on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be **punished** with everlasting **destruction** from the presence of the Lord ... (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).*

On the other hand, Paul does not mention such wrath associated with Christ’s appearing anywhere in his latter epistles.

As given by the testimony of Paul himself, the hope taught in His ministry during the time frame covered by the book of Acts (which encompasses his early epistles) is “*the Hope of Israel.*”

*For **the hope of Israel** I am bound with this chain (Act 28:20).*

*For on account of **the expectation of Israel** this chain is lying about me (Concordant).*

This hope involves the Second Coming of Christ to the earth to establish His righteous kingdom as taught in the Circumcision writings.

In his early epistles, Paul teaches the same “*Hope of Israel*” using the same language of other authors of Scripture. In his latter epistles he reveals “*That Blessed Hope*” or “*That Happy Expectation*” which involves Christ’s appearance in the celestials, and our appearing with Him there. This is a brand new hope revealed by Paul that takes place prior to “*the Hope of Israel.*” This advanced expectation for the Body of Christ has nothing to do with a hope on the earth, and therefore has no earthly signs

or timeframes associated with it. It has been the expectation for believers for nearly 2000 years. It may be a reality any day, or after another 2000 years or more – but never let anyone take your hope!

Though the hope of I Thessalonians 4 has as its expectation meeting Christ in the atmospheric clouds and simply returning to the earth to reign and rule with Him (*“and so shall we ever be with the Lord”*), *“that Blessed Hope”* is the expectation of our glorious appearing with Christ in the celestials, there to establish His righteous rule in the heavens, all necessary prior to the reinstatement of Israel’s prophetic program.

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