

The Apostolic Preaching

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The Apostles were under the teaching of Jesus for three and a half years. They heard all of His teaching on the Kingdom and eternal inheritance not only the few excerpts recorded in the Gospels. In fact, on the Sunday of His resurrection, while walking unrecognized along the road to Emmaus, *“beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”*¹ A little later that afternoon, when appearing before all of the disciples, *“He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”*²

Immediately following this enlightening of their minds to all of the prophecies concerning Himself, Jesus spent forty more days instructing His Apostles about *“the Kingdom of God.”*³ None of this oral teaching was recorded in the New Testament. The disciples heard all of Jesus’ teaching on the subject of the Kingdom and inheritance in the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, the Olivet Discourse, the Upper Room Discourse, and forty more days of intense Kingdom teaching. Yet, what was their question at the end of these 40 days? Did it concern flying away to heaven? Hardly! They asked Him, *“Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* Jesus did not rebuke them, nor did He question or challenge the premise of their question. Instead, He said, *“It is not for you to know times or seasons.”* Times or seasons of what? – the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel!

Let’s face it. Jesus would not have sent these men to proclaim His message to the ends of the earth unless they had a good grasp of His teaching. It is obvious that their expectation concerned the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel – the Jewish Messianic hope. Jesus did not rebuke them for embracing such a hope. Rather, He affirmed their expectation and hope by saying that they should not concern themselves with when, but with their present task of taking the Gospel of the Kingdom to the nations.

Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached his first sermon under the direct inspiration of the Spirit. Did he preach about “heaven” as the inheritance? No. He quoted from Psalm 16 to prove that Jesus’ resurrection had been prophesied by David,

¹ Luke 24:27

² Luke 24:44-45

³ Acts 1:3

because David knew that God had sworn an oath to him that He would raise up one of his descendants to sit on David's throne and reign over Israel forever.⁴ The Psalm Peter quoted speaks of Jesus' resurrection as well as His Land inheritance.

Psalm 16:5-11 LXX

5 "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou art he that restores my inheritance to me.

6 The lines [measured borders⁵] have fallen to me in the best places, yea, I have a most excellent heritage.

7 I will bless the Lord who has instructed me; my reins too have chastened me even till night.

8 I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue exulted; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 10 because thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 11 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou wilt fill me with joy with thy countenance: at thy right hand there are delights forever."

Notice Christ was speaking in the first person throughout this passage, both of His resurrection and the inheritance promised Him in Psalm 2. Peter's hearers were all Jews, who had returned to Jerusalem for the Pentecost festival. They would certainly know this Psalm; it was one of the inspired songs of David in the Jewish Hymnal, frequently sung in the synagogues. Therefore, they would automatically assume from Peter's applying it to Jesus Christ that He was the Messiah who will receive the inheritance – the Land as an everlasting possession. In Peter's second sermon, he was more explicit regarding the Land inheritance.

Acts 3:19-21 NKJV

19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

⁴ Acts 2:23-32

⁵ The Greek word (LXX) is "schoinion" and refers to measured out boundaries of the Land inheritance. The same word appears in 1 Chron. 16:17. "He confirmed it to Jacob for an ordinance, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, 'To you will I give the land of Canaan, the measured border of your inheritance,' when they were few in number, when they were but little, and dwelt as strangers in it."

The “times of refreshing” and “restoration of all things” were spoken of by all the prophets, according to Peter. Isaiah, in particular, spoke of these things. For example:

Isaiah 35:1-7 NKJV

1 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; 2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. 4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. 7 The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs of water; In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

Peter’s Jewish hearers fully expected the literal fulfillment of such prophecies, and Peter gave them absolutely no reason to doubt them. He simply connected such promises with the return of Jesus Christ.

Paul & the Restored Creation

The Apostle Paul spoke plainly of the restoration of the Land, connecting it to the resurrection of the bodies of believers.

Rom. 8:16-25 NKJV

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 joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Paul has linked together the lifting of the curse on creation with the resurrection of our bodies. He said that we were “saved in this hope.” That is, this is the “hope” of true Christianity, the hope that accompanies the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. Any other “hope” is a false hope. And any Gospel that has a different “hope” is a false Gospel.

Paul & the Abrahamic Land Inheritance

Paul's preaching and teaching concerning the Christian's hope and inheritance was firmly grounded in the as yet unfulfilled promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that both they and their 'Seed' would inherit the Promised Land as an everlasting possession at the resurrection. Paul's defense before Agrippa towards the end of his ministry makes this fact abundantly plain.

Acts 26:6-8 NKJV

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. 8 Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

The "hope of the promise made by God to our fathers" was the Promised Land as an everlasting possession. Notice that Paul expected the realization of this hope to be achieved through the resurrection. There is no other way for God to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they personally (as well as their 'Seed') would receive that Land as their own eternal possession. In Paul's defense, he claimed that he taught the same hope of inheritance as all of the 12 tribes of Israel. No one would dispute that the Jewish expectation at the time was the eternal possession of the Land in the Messianic Kingdom. Paul's Gospel message contained precisely the same "hope" which was shared by the Jews. The difference was in how to attain the resurrection and realize that common hope.

In the 3rd chapter of Galatians, Paul gave an extensive explanation of the Abrahamic Covenant in contrast to the Mosaic Covenant. The permanent "inheritance" comes only through the Abrahamic Covenant. The temporary and conditional inheritance Israel received under the Law could not undermine the unconditional "promise" God gave personally to Abraham, even though most of Israel would fail to receive the Abrahamic inheritance because of their stubborn clinging to the Law as a means of receiving the inheritance.

Gal 3:6-29 NKJV

6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the

Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15 Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. 18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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 seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The promise Paul was referring to was the "inheritance" promised to Abraham and to His 'Seed.' That promise was the Land as an everlasting possession. No other promise was made to both Abraham and to his 'Seed.' In verse 16, the words "and to your seed" are quoted verbatim from the Greek Septuagint. They are found exclusively in the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in reference to the Land as an everlasting

inheritance. *“And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”*⁶ The promise of the eternal Land inheritance was to Abraham and also to His 'Seed.'" Paul's point was that Jesus Christ is the 'Seed' spoken of in those promises. And since those who are baptized into Christ are "Christ's" own, then we too are "Abraham's seed" and become "heirs" according to the promise that God made to Abraham. In other words, we will receive the eternal inheritance of the Land along with Christ and along with Abraham.

In the 6th chapter of Hebrews, Paul again referenced this promise to Abraham, and stated that it is *“the hope lying before us”* and *“our anchor of the soul.”* He said that the reason God confirmed the promise to Abraham with an oath was so that we, the recipients of the promised inheritance, might have assurance of this hope and cling to it.

The Apostolic preaching contained the same hope of the eternal Land inheritance that the Jews sought after. It was to be achieved through resurrection unto eternal life. This hope was based on the Abrahamic Covenant promise of an everlasting Land possession for Abraham and his 'Seed,' the Davidic Covenant promise of the coming Messiah who would receive the nations and the uttermost parts of the Land as His inheritance, and the promises contained in the Prophets.

Since Jesus had demonstrated the resurrection unto eternal life, only those repentant believers who were joined to the 'Seed' (Christ) through baptism would attain to the resurrection from among the dead to receive the promised inheritance along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

⁶ Gen 17:8 KJV