

The Tale of Two Jerusalems

Opening Argument

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The letter written by Paul to the Galatians gives us an early glimpse into the gospel message. In 1.11,12 Paul states that he did not receive this gospel “according to a man” (*kata anthropon*). It is “through a revelation of Jesus Messiah” (*di’ apokalypseos Iesou christou*). This statement, however, must agree with other Pauline assertions concerning the material he preached. In *II Tim 3.16* “Every writing (Scripture) is God-inspired...so that the man of God may be complete.” It is of no doubt that Paul has the OT writings in mind, since he had just mentioned that Timothy was “from a babe” taught “the sacred writings” (3.15). Secondly, Luke records Paul as asserting that “I say nothing else than what both the prophets and Moses said was about to happen (*mellonton from mello*)” (Acts 26.22). Paul then expounds on what that content of Moses and the prophets said: “That Christ should suffer, be the first to be raised, preach to his people (Israel) and be a light for the Gentiles” (26.23). Sounds like the gospel to me.

This expression “light for the Gentiles” is found in Luke’s gospel as well. In 2.32, Simeon spoke that Jesus was “a light for revelation (*apokalupsis*) of the Gentiles.” Paul, in Galatians, is preaching this *apokalupsis* to the Gentiles. But, it is clear that this revelation is “seen” in the OT scriptures as well, for he preached “nothing else” than what Moses and prophets said would be. Therefore, is this prophecy of “light to the Gentiles” found in the OT? Is the gospel in the prophets? According to Peter it should be, for the prophets foretold “the things which have now (*nun*) been told to you by those who have preached the gospel to you” (I Pe 1.10-12). Peter was writing this to those before A.D. 70, therefore, Peter, like Paul, is preaching what was *then* unfolding in their very day *from the prophets*.

The “light to the Gentiles” is clearly found in the prophets. Because of space, I will limit the search to *Isaiah 42.6* where we find the exact expression. Jesus is the subject in 42.1-5, all should agree. Jesus comes and “establishes justice” and the “islands will put their trust in his law” (42.4). He is made a “covenant” for the people and “light for the Gentiles” (42.6). What will result? “To open eyes that are blind, and to free captives from prison, and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness” (42.7). These are “new things” that Yahweh declares (42.8). It is clear that Mark’s gospel shows Jesus doing just that: healing the blind, setting free the captives from the dungeon, and bringing his people, Israel, to the light. Then, after his ascension, he commands the disciples to go “to the nations” and preach the revelation. This revelation is “the light to the Gentiles.”

The “gospel” Paul preached “to the Gentiles” was a “command” from the Lord, as Paul stated in Acts 13.45-48. He quotes *Isaiah 49.6*, which is a context of Israel’s

“restoration” (49.6). Paul also quotes *Isaiah* 49.8 in *II Co* 6.2: “In the time of my favor, I will answer you (Israel), and in the day of my salvation I will help you (Israel). I will keep you and make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, ‘Come out,’ and to those in darkness, ‘be free.’” According to Paul and Peter, this “time” and “day” had come, and they see themselves as fulfilling the prophets through their preaching of “glad tidings” (the gospel) to Israel and the Gentiles. This was, then, in the context of *Isaiah*, the time of Israel’s deliverance and restoration. There is no way around this conclusion.

An objection is raised at this point, because, if Paul was writing during the time God was restoring Israel, then why was Israel destroyed and hardened in her very time of God’s restoring? It *appears* to the naked eye that God was not restoring anything to national Israel, because they rejected him. Well, was Paul mistaken? He is preaching the light of Isaiah’s prophecy, and Peter said that what the prophets spoke had come to them in their generation, to whom he wrote. But, Israel was exiled by Rome. Is there a problem? No. Paul deals with this very felt problem in his day in the letter to the Galatians.

Before we get to that, however, more material must be used in order to bring us to that great letter. In John 11.51,52 it says, “...he prophesied that Jesus was about (*emellen* from *mello*) to die for the Jewish nation and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together (*synagoge*) and make them one.” This echoes *Ezekiel* 37 where God “raises” the house of Israel, restores them, and David rules over them and “makes them one” (37.17). Paul also states that Jews and Gentiles are made into “one new man, Jesus Christ” (*Eph* 2.14). The Gentiles shall stream to the “mount of the Lord in Zion” and “learn peace.” This, *Isaiah* 2.1-ff says will happen “in the last days.” Well, the nations (Gentiles) were coming to the Lord through Paul’s revelation, which was the light for the nations by his own admission. Therefore, Paul saw himself as being in the “time” and “day of salvation” in which God would “gather together” his people, restoring them to their “inheritance” along with the Gentiles in the last days. This “restoration” is pictured in *Ezekiel* 37 as a “resurrection of the dead.” But, to make the problem felt once again, how was this happening in Paul’s day for Israel, since Israel was hardened, and eventually scattered by Rome? That does not look like any answer to prophecy, does it? If Israel was promised to be restored to her land, then why were they scattered? Now, we can come to Galatians.

Paul mentioned those who “preached another gospel” other than what he was preaching. This gospel, preached by certain Jews, taught that the Gentiles “must be circumcised and obey the customs of Moses in order to be saved” (*Acts* 15.1,5). The Gentiles must follow the law *according to the flesh, the letter*. Paul, on the other hand, stated that circumcision was *spiritual, according to the Spirit*. He then goes on to state that Abraham’s promise “to the nations” was being realized through the ministry of the Spirit by the cross of Christ. Thus, these Gentiles in Galatia “began with the Spirit” (3.3). It is “by faith” that one received the “promise of the Spirit” which is directly tied to Abraham’s promise (3.14-25), not “by works” of Moses’ law, which the Judaizers were preaching. The Gentiles are made “sons of Abraham” *spiritually* by their union with Christ (3.29). There are “children of the promise” (Jews and Gentiles by faith in Christ

who become incorporated in the “one new man”) and “children of the flesh” (Jews who maintain Moses’ fleshly ordinances).

With this distinction, Paul talks about the present city of Jerusalem (4.21-31). The two women, Hagar and Sarah, represent two covenants (4.24), two types of birth (one by “promise” another “according to the flesh” - 4.23), two types of mountains (Sinai and Zion - 4.25), and two cities. This is a blended allegory (4.24 - the Greek word there is *allegoreo*). Hagar stands for sons “according to flesh (*kata sarka*),” “Sinai,” “the old covenant,” and “the present city of Jerusalem.” Her children according to the flesh are “in bondage.” They are “slaves.” They are not “heirs.” In contrast, Sarah has the son of a “promise,” and stands for “children of the promise,” the “new covenant,” and “Jerusalem above, the mother of us all” (4.26). One point here should be glaring: *there are two cities of Jerusalem!*

The Jerusalem “above” inherits the promise. Paul then quotes the scripture of *Genesis 21.10*: “Cast out of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son. Therefore, brethren, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman” (4.30,31).

In an allegory, one may simply replace the allegorical type with its true referent (anti-type). The “slave woman” refers to “the present city of Jerusalem,” therefore, I can say that Paul’s point is clearly, “cast out of the present city of Jerusalem and her son, for the present city of Jerusalem and her son will NEVER share in the INHERITANCE with those who are of Jerusalem above.” The problem is solved by showing that there are two Jerusalems. One will be the center of Israel’s restoration, the other will be “cast out.” One will share in the inheritance promised through Abraham, and the other will never share in it. The Jerusalem above will be the fulfillment of those promises made to Jerusalem “according to the flesh.” Jerusalem “according to the flesh” is simply the “shadow and type” of the reality that is in Christ Jesus (*Col 2.16,17*).

For Paul, the “one new man” was *spiritual*. The “spiritual blessings of Israel” have come to the world (*Ro 15.27*). God made one new man, and restored Israel and the Gentiles through the cross of Christ to her “heavenly land” (*Heb 11.16*). Abraham was not looking for dirt, but a “heavenly country” (*Heb 11.16*). This was the “inheritance.” It is a “better inheritance” than dirt! The author of *Hebrews* concludes that “ye have come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem” (12.22). That is the same Jerusalem Paul mentioned and the same Jerusalem the prophets of the OT saw as the center of restoration. The Jerusalem “below” will NEVER (Paul’s words, not mine) come into this inheritance (therefore, the prophets NEVER would have seen this Jerusalem restored), yet, we have false teachers proclaiming that God is going to “rebuild” Jerusalem one day! Why does He have to rebuild Jerusalem when He lives in Jerusalem above? What needs to be rebuilt?

For Paul, then, God was raising the nation of Israel, and her scattered children, and the Gentiles, in fulfillment of prophecy, to heavenly Zion, fulfilling *Isaiah 2.1-ff*. He was raising them, gathering them together, and making them all one new man through the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that he is the resurrection of the dead (*Jhn*

11.25). Through Jesus' ministry the time was already upon them in which "the dead will hear his voice and live" (*Jhn 5.25*). The consummation of the "end" of the old covenant (the "last days") would "soon" vanish (*Heb 8.13*) and the new covenant, Sarah, would be completely unfettered by old covenant ties. She would be "released" from her husband through death. This brings us to A.D. 70. Jerusalem "below" was finally "cast out" never to receive the inheritance. It was a declaration to the world that Jesus had "brought salvation" to those who eagerly awaited his judgment on Jerusalem. It let the entire world, then and now, know that it is by the one name, Jesus, that a man is saved, not through circumcision, not priests, not temples, not genealogies, not race, not heritage, not Moses, but JESUS! This is why Paul saved to preach "nothing else but him crucified." Was the cross Israel's answer to restoration? Was it the "way" through which Israel would be "redeemed" and "raised from the dead" into her glorious inheritance into the heavenly, eternal, never-again-to-be-destroyed city of Jerusalem? YES. How? Through the cross of Jesus (death) and the resurrection from the dead of Jesus (life) by the power of the Spirit and the gospel to those who believed and who will believe during the time of what is now "the age to come."

In A.D. 70, when the slave woman was finally "cast out," Jesus, the deliverer, "came *from* Zion and took away their sins" (*Ro 11.26*, *cf.* the quote to *Is 59.20* where it says, "the deliverer will come *to* Zion." Paul changes "to" to "from" because Zion for him is "above" not "below"). He saved Israel and created one new man, the body of Christ, wherein there is no longer Jews or Greeks but all are transformed in Christ's glorious body. Where he is, there also the church stands without spot or wrinkle before the throne of God, serving him day and night in his temple. If only the church could understand the full, biblical message of whom she really is on earth because of what she is in heaven.