

## Early Transition

- Israel was (I believe) cut off with the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7)
  - This seems to have been approximately one year after Jesus' three-year ministry was completed.
 

**Luke 13:6—9** <sup>6</sup>And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. <sup>7</sup>"And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup>"And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; <sup>9</sup>and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down."
- With the cutting off of Israel (Romans 11) came the rising up of the Church, the Body of Christ through Paul (Acts 9)
- As we see the cutting off (diminishing) of Israel, we are also witnessing the rising up of the Church
- Even though Israel as a nation was cut off from the Millennial Blessings, God, in His mercy, was still dealing with individuals within Israel.
  - Saul in Damascus (Acts 9:20)
  - Peter in Lydda and multitudes of Jews saved there and in Sharon (Acts 9:35)
  - Peter in Joppa (Acts 9:42)
- Since they became believers after Saul was saved, I believe they became members of the Body of Christ, this in spite of the grace gospel being in its infancy.
  - The Body of Christ was formed when Saul was converted
  - The problem is that the gospel message, as outlined in 1 Corinthians 15:1—4, had not been fully developed and therefore could be confused with the gospel of the Kingdom.
  - The common element between the two gospels was faith in Jesus Christ. Those who put their faith in Christ were brought into the Body.
  - The Corinthian letters were written some 15 years after Cornelius was saved. During that time God was revealing truths of the Mystery through Paul. It took additional time for Paul to relay these mysteries to all the believers he served.
- Cornelius is the very first Gentile believer recorded.
  - We know this from Acts 10:45; 11:18
- The method of his salvation was different than in early Acts.
  - Peter never got to the point where they would ask him: "What shall we do?" because the Holy Spirit interrupted Peter before he could finish speaking.
  - The Holy Spirit fell on them just as He fell on the Jews in early Acts. This isn't what we experience when we get saved but was necessary for Peter and those with him see that God was now working with the Gentiles just as He had worked with the Jews.
 

**Special note:** This Spirit baptism is not the special indwelling work of the Holy Spirit that we experience. We are baptized BY the Holy Spirit into Christ. However, those in Corinth, under the ministry of Paul, experienced the same baptism of the Holy Spirit as we see in Acts 2. This is evidenced by the Corinthians speaking in tongues. This speaking in tongues was a sign for Israel and after Israel had been completely cut off, by the time Paul had written all his Epistles, all sign gifts had been cut off. The believing Corinthians were sealed by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The sign gifts were in addition to this internal dwelling by the Holy Spirit.
  - The necessity of baptism for purification was eliminated so the Holy Spirit came upon them without the ritual of baptism.
- After Cornelius, there is no record of the 12 Apostles ministering to any other Gentile.

## Rabbit Trail

- Last week I mentioned that those entering the Millennial Kingdom would not necessarily be guaranteed a place in the Eternal Kingdom.
  - The final point of decision for each person will be at the end of the Millennial Kingdom when Satan is loosed and individuals will be given a final opportunity to choose between God and Satan.
  - Entrance into the Kingdom seems to be based on good works (or at least not doing bad works).
    - Need to be as innocent as children (Matthew 18:3; Luke 18:17; Mark 10:15)
    - Need to have a certain level of righteousness (Matthew 5:20)
    - Need to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)
    - Do the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21)
  - Those who are lawless will be removed from the Kingdom.
    - Matthew 13:41** The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,
  - Anything that would cause you to sin must be removed or done away with. (Matt. 18:7—11)
  - The Kingdom seems to have been made for those who did righteous acts.
    - Matthew 25:34—40** 34"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'40"The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

- Baker agrees with this way of thinking: Charles. F. Baker *A Dispensational Theology* Page 609
  - Frankly, I have not done a careful study on this idea but it seems plausible that we cannot assume everyone initially brought into the Millennial Kingdom will be saved. If this idea is correct then entrance into the Kingdom and personal salvation have different criteria. Every believer at the end of the Tribulation will enter the Kingdom while everyone who enters the Kingdom is not a believer. Everyone will make their final decision at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. The need to endure unto the end is just as important ion the Kingdom as it was in the Tribulation.
    - Matthew 24:13** But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

## Acts 11:1—18

### Peter Reports to the Circumcision

- Those back in Jerusalem were concerned about Peter's meeting with Cornelius. The Jews understood this to be a direct violation of the Mosaic Law.
  - This separation from the Gentiles goes back to the Law.
  - This separating Israel out from the world was a step Israel needed to take to be holy for the Lord.
  - Even Jesus told the Disciples not to go to the Gentiles with the Gospel of the Kingdom.
- Peter needed to explain how God was working in a new way with the Gentiles.
- When they heard this, they rejoiced.
  - Many think the Jews were bigots for how they treated the Gentiles. This verse seems to prove otherwise.

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