

Introduction to First Edition

Paul wrote in his last letter, his second to Timothy, that his ministry was being discarded;
[This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.](#) 2Ti 1:15

Asia included the Ephesians and the Colossians and on the surface it might suggest that there was a massive turning away from Christ. This is not the case. They had turned away from Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, the one sent to them by Christ.

At the time of writing, Paul would be aware of the persecutions against Christians, particularly by Nero, and was more than likely to die in the same tide of hate. Christians had not turned away from Christ. Many were to die for their faith in Him but within a few centuries from the close of the New Testament era, the church fathers were, for the most part, void of Pauline doctrine. These dark ages for the Christian community lasted nearly 900 years.

The reformation was not the result of anyone reading the Gospels; the reformation came about because Paul was rediscovered. Justification by faith without works resurfaced and the power of the formalized church had diminished.

The literal return of Christ was another doctrine which faded into obscurity and only resurfaced in the years after the reformation. Early in the nineteenth century the “rapture” concept took shape and has become the flagship of most eschatological thinking. This traditional doctrine in all its variations must be exposed for what it is, a masterstroke of deception.

The orthodox rapture theory constantly holds Christians in a false state of heightened expectancy as the faithful look for, and pass, yet another due by date proclaimed by yet another zealous Christian individual or group who claim to have had some “word of knowledge” or “prophecy” about it.

When Paul wrote to the Colossians he said this:

[since indeed you are continuing in the faith, having been firmly established and steadfast, and are not being shifted away from the hope \[or, confident expectation\] of the Gospel which you heard, the one having been preached in all the creation under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a servant.](#) Col 1:23
ALT.

Paul’s confidence here is that the Colossian had not been moved away from the hope of the gospel which was entrusted to Him by Christ. The hope of Ephesians and Colossians is not the hope of the Gospels or 1Thess.4 written in the Acts period.

When the Christian community moved away from Paul in his later ministry, they moved away from the hope for us today.

The widely accepted “rapture” is not the appearing of Christ. This denominational rapture is a sad and sorry testimony to Christianity’s failure to study Paul carefully according to those Bible study principles so clearly given us.

My prayer is that this book will stimulate honest thinking in the matter of the hope before the Church which is His Body only found in the post Acts epistles of Paul.

Brian R Kelson.
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Christianity's decline into Legalism

Many evangelical Christians are surprised at the growth of the Messianic "Judaism" congregations both here in the United States of America and worldwide. However, a moment of quiet reflection on the history of Christian theology would see such developments as a natural progression.

Records suggest that as early as A.D. 160 Justin Martyr saw the "church" as "the true spiritual Israel" and allegory, spiritualization and replacement theology have underpinned Christianity's understanding of itself ever since.

Replacement theology, whether in its wider or restricted view, proclaims that the "church" has either replaced Israel, or is the means whereby God is fulfilling all His divine purposes outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures. Replacement theology transfers all and anything of Israel and eisotetically reads "the church" into most if not all passages of Scripture relating to that nation.

Most of the faithful consider themselves New Covenant believers and many churches have priests, temples, mercy seats, altars, water baptisms, tithing and worship which is centered on the Passover/Communion Table and the promises made to Israel's fathers.

At time of writing the Messianics are one of the fastest growing denominations, and in the light of the transference concepts promoted over two millennia, the fertile theological ground for them to flourish has long been available. Indeed, we could applaud the Messianics as being hyper evangelicals, taking replacement theology to its logical conclusion.

No doubt we are seeing a return to the bondage of works and the complete Judaizing of Christianity as this slide into legalism deepens.

How is it that the gangrene of replacement theology infected the Christian community so swiftly and is now pandemic and ultimately manifested in the Messianic movements? The answer is a simple one; our predecessors ignored Paul and failed to follow the New Testament events according to the Old Testament pattern. We, following in their footsteps, have likewise ignored Paul and the Old Testament patterns dispensationally.

Instead of seeing the Old Testament patterns as typifying the restoration of Israel's kingdom and the reign of Christ on the earth, we have metamorphosed these facts as being the church which is His Body in type. This has resulted in dispensational confusion. By this replacement eisegesis we have nurtured the principles upon which the Messianics flourish.

This book hopes to restore the Old Testament pattern in its correct setting and magnify the present dispensation, which up until Acts 28 was hidden in God. The Mystery, revealed to Paul alone, is that which the Father would have all Christians know, Col.1:27.

No attempt has been made to spell out every detail in this unfolding; in many places we have painted with a broad brush. It is our prayer that the reader will find the joy of the Word of God by searching every reference in its context to see if these things are so.

May this enlarged edition facilitate a wider understanding of this mystery; the dispensation of the grace of God in which we live and the current hope thereof.

Brian R Kelson
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