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Jesus Coming Down From Heaven, But the Church Going Up to Heaven!

By Jan Lilleby

□□ □□□□ Within the denominations of Christianity we do experience various ideas and thoughts regarding the believer's final salvation.

An often□□ *major idea and thought*□□ is that the believing Christian shall have his final salvation in the instance that Jesus is returning from heaven – in His Second Advent.

□ Many denominations let this idea come to the fore in their respective meetings and projects. You can hear such ideas coming from the pulpits.

Another example of how we Christians thinks regarding the final salvation, can be found as quite dominating inside the Charismatic-Pentecostal movements of various beliefs. It mainly sets forth the idea that the believers shall be lifted up (raptured) in clouds to meet the Lord in the air – and from there be transferred to heaven. Together with those who had laid dead in graves, but are raised up in the same instance. They lean on the doctrine Paul wrote in 1 Thes. 4. I recommend to you to read my article on this topic, called □ *“Paul's Teaching of a Coming Rapture Had a Sell-by-Date”*. Check it out here in my website.

As the headline here suggests,□□ the Biblical facts on our final salvation into the heavens (Greek,□□ *epiouranos*)□□ are like□□ Paul told us, that it will not happen by Jesus coming down from heaven, but rather by God in His might and power have□□ us□□ *appear with Christ in glory in heaven*□□ – Col. 3:1-4.

In Paul's only epistles to the Church Dispensation, the Body of Christ, (the one to the Ephesians and the one to the Colossians), he□□ **overruled**□□ what he had been teaching to the Messianic believers in Acts□□ period as found in 1 Thes. 4 on□□ the so-called 'Rapture'□□ up in clouds□□ to meet Jesus. This rapture-doctrine was something Paul taught□□ *only*□□ during the Acts period when he offered Israel and proselytes the kingdom on earth, with Jesus as king at His coming (Greek,□□ *Parousia*). It had nothing to do with the Church dispensation, because our□□ dispensation was not revealed to anyone, including Paul, until□□ *after*□□ the falling away of Israel as God's holy nation (Acts 28:25-28).□□

The Greek word□□ *Parousia*□□ means actually and literary that Jesus will ARRIVE on earth, to stay here. So lexica says□

"...arrival of Jesus on earth to establish the millennial kingdom of God..."



If Jesus was to first come down close to earth and rapture believers up to Himself in the air, for then to take these up to the heaven where He just came from, it could not have been written *Parousia*. The word was used to tell of Jesus' **arrival** to stay here! The concept just mentioned are most often found inside the Charismatic-Pentecostal camps.

Inside the airports we find two sure signs, one says ARRIVAL and the other one says DEPARTURE. There is no doubt whatsoever what those signs mean. You just can't miss it.

Arrival has become the international word for a plane of passengers which has landed – it came down from its flight in the air and it landed, it *arrived on earth, namely the respective airport*.

When Paul wrote the two epistles, the one to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, he presented an *entirely new untaught free Grace Gospel*, as something God just had revealed to him and nobody else at that time. Check out Eph. 3:1-9 where Paul declares that revelation. It was a Mystery hidden in God.

In the times reported in Acts, 28 A.D. – 62 A.D., the apostles *only preached the promised kingdom of God on earth*, and Jesus as *the coming king* as soon as Israel had repented as a nation. The Law of Moses was still standing tall, but the apostles added the New Covenant doctrine to Israel on top of that. Thus the new covenant *overruled* the Law in question of sin and guilt and eventual punishments. The New Covenant served God's Grace to them by faith in Christ for all believing Jews and proselytes.

Rom. 3:31, *Do we then by faith make the Law of no effect, overthrow it or make it a dead letter? Certainly not! On the contrary, we confirm and establish and uphold the Law."*

Likewise Acts 13:38, 39, *So let it be clearly known and understood by you, brethren, that through this Man (Jesus) forgiveness and removal of sins is now proclaimed to you; - And that through Him everyone who believes is absolved from every charge from which he could not be justified and freed by the Law of Moses and given right standing with God."*

The Law of Moses was in effect in the times of the apostles as told in Acts, and the New Covenant overshadowed it in cases where believers had sinned, and God gave them Grace because of Jesus having paid their sins on the cross.

God demanded in those times that the sinners had to

confess[] sins, James[] 5:13-16.

But as we come to Paul and the two church-epistles in which God had revealed the free Grace to Paul,[] (62-63 A.D.) -[] we learn that God in Christ had the Law of Moses[] **abolished**[] entirely – including all the ordinances[] (Eph. 2:14, 15).[]

By Moses God had His Law and commandments given to Israel below[] Mt. Horeb, but by Paul's apostolic ministry[] as a[] *"...prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles..."*[] -[] God had the very same Law abolished since the falling away of Israel as a nation for God.[] No wonder, because where in O.T. can you ever find that God had Moses or the Prophets demand the Gentile world to keep the Law served at Sinai? It applied to Israel only, and no other. It lasted for about 1500 years.

The fall of Israel[] is described in Acts 28:25-28 – especially verse 27 points out that God considered Israel as reprobate; they[] **would not repent**[] and believe on Jesus as Messiah. Thus He broke off all contact with them, and a few years later the nation was destroyed by Rome as we know.[]

Jesus had prophesied of that judgement in Mat. 22:7 of the "Kings Servants" – because the leaders killed His servants[] (apostles)[] and caused the King to[] get[] fierce anger and sent His soldiers to kill those murderers and to burn down their city, Jerusalem. It happened in 70 A.D.

The apostles[] *stopped entirely*[] their preaching to Israel to try to have them repent, for God had given them over to destruction.

But Paul as I said, had the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9) revealed to him and we cannot find him anymore going to the Jews and the Synagogues. He went to the Greek, the Gentiles as we can learn from Ephesians and Colossians. He simply stopped preaching New Covenant and the soon coming of the Lord, and went forth with the[] **free international Grace Gospel for all the peoples**. God shifted the dispensation as it says in Eph. 3:1-3,

*"...I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake and on behalf of you Gentiles – 2: Assuming that you have heard[] **of the stewardship of God's grace**[] that was entrusted to me for your benefit. 3: And that[] **the mystery was made known to me**[] and I was allowed to comprehend it[] **by direct revelation**, as I already briefly wrote you."*

It is held for true in most schooled theologian circles, that Paul wrote both the Ephesians and Colossians epistles as he had recently been jailed for the second time, after having been cleared as innocent by Emperor Nero's court.

This shifting[] of dispensation[] changed of course the conditions regarding the previous doctrine of the Rapture and the Second Advent in 1 Thes. 4 – since Israel[] *now had fallen away*[] as a nation for God.

Instead of Jesus coming down from heaven to earth to establish the promised millennial kingdom, it is now rather – that the Church, the Body of Christ, is going to[] *come up*

to Christ. God shall transfer us supernaturally right into His glorious heaven...we shall be appearing with Christ in glory in heaven as I quoted some from Col. 3:1-4 above. The full quote is found below.

Our hope now as Christians is the hope of heaven (Greek, *epiouranos*) with Christ in glory. Not a hope on earth in the millennial kingdom. We have to get this straight!

Jesus is not the King of the Church, He is the Head of His Body which is the Church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22).

THE HEAVENLY HOPE OF SALVATION ACCORDING TO PAUL

Col. 3:1-3 is setting the tone,

"If then you have been raised with Christ, aim at and seek the rich eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2: And set your minds and keep them set on what is above, not on the things that are on the earth. 3: For you have died (from all worldly things), and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4:

When Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

The verse 4 is related to Eph. 4:30 – saying,

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

The day of redemption is the day when we shall be appearing with Christ in glory in heaven, for sure.

Paul had already pointed to the heaven up above, and so he continuously go on with heaven: That is where we shall be appearing with Christ in glory.

That day of redemption includes all who have died as Christian believers in the times since the apostles and up to that day; and they shall be taken into heaven. Eventual resurrections will happen in heaven and not here on earth.

Don't think vertically or horizontally – but *extra-dimensionally*...heaven is not a planet far out in the universe, no, it is a heavenly world outside of and above the universe, into another dimension entirely. Christ is there now at His Father's right hand in might and glory and power.

I hope this article cleared up the issue of the hope of our salvation. It is clear that our hope is heaven up above, and not the millennial kingdom on earth.