

# Can the Present Dispensation Be Concluded Much Earlier Than The Great Tribulation For Israel?

By Jan Lilleby

It seem to me that the church will NOT be present on earth when the day arrives of God sending the prophesied "Great Tribulation" upon Israel (Mat. 24:21, 22), with its seven years of horrors, disasters and plagues super-natural interventions caused by God Almighty to bring forth a new Israel, which will become the nation of God on earth.

A nation of God, which will receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah King, ruling from Zion.

The dispensation of the Church started as Paul confronted the Sanhedrin in Rome in spring 60 AD as we read Acts 28:25-28. Paul tried to make them repent to Jesus, but they split up in disagreement. God's will at that time was to have them all repent to Jesus Christ, so He could send Jesus back down to Israel to establish the millennial kingdom promised (Dan. 2:44).

As Paul had this confrontation in Rome, there had been much turmoil when he had escaped Jerusalem and the mob in the temple, just two years earlier – he barely managed to have the Romans save his life, as they took him into custody and brought the apostle down to Caesarea at night. That started a period of four years in chains – two of which was in Rome, and he was released in 62 AD.

As Paul escaped Jerusalem, leaving behind him a furious mob with murder on their agenda, it had not gotten any better around the time that Paul was sat free in 62 AD.

This meeting at Rome with the eleven members of Sanhedrin (it was eleven Synagogues there) – became thus a final resort, the point of no return for Israel to accept or refuse Jesus Christ as their Messiah King in the eyes of God. If they refused this last opportunity to set things straight, they would indeed be judged by God and go down. They refused, and God counted it as Israel's final decision and He cut all bonds with His ancient people/nation from that moment on. Israel had fallen from God!

Paul's statement in Acts 28:28 says it all,

*"So let it be understood by you then that the salvation of God **has been sent to the Gentiles**, and they will listen to it!"* (They will receive Jesus)

Paul was the very last prophet/apostle who spoke officially to Israel in history. After Paul we cannot find any other authority speaking to Israel in Scripture. It is entirely silent from heaven, and it is like this even today.

Acts 28:29-31 reports to us that Paul made some efforts to try and convert Jews there at Rome, but yet the author of the Acts Book, Luke, tells nothing of any new converts.

In Bible-historical time line, the next writings (after 62 AD) are the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, in which we find for the first time Paul's new freshly revealed Gospel of unmerited Grace.

It is Arch typical that Paul in Eph. 3:1 – after first having expressed joy over the faith they had in Christ – gives us a certain clue of his new ministry. Earlier he had been sent as an apostle to Israel in the Provinces, but all of a sudden in 63 AD as he wrote to the Ephesians, he said, **“For this reason, I, Paul, am the prisoner of Jesus the Christ for the sake and on behalf of you Gentiles.”**

From that time in history (63 AD) Paul no longer ministered for the preaching of the Gospel of the millennial kingdom to the Jews, that of having Jesus returning from heaven to establish that kingdom on earth to Israel – no, this was now put “on ice” into a far future day, now Paul had been made (into) a prisoner of Jesus Christ so that we Gentiles could get the free Grace Gospel of salvation by faith alone, no works, - a pure gift of God. Our hope is NOT that Millennial Kingdom on earth, it is the hope of heaven up above (Greek: *epiouranos*).

The expression “prisoner of Jesus Christ” is pointing to his **second imprisonment**. His first (60-62 AD) was a situation of *custody* awaiting the appeal court of Nero. But the second was as he had been cast in jail (under false accusations, probably) which was a *regular jail cell*, not a rented lodging as in 60 AD. He sat there not alone, since we can find *Aristarchus as his co-prisoner* in Col. 4:10. But as Paul first met with the leadership at Rome, he told them that it was for the sake of **Israel's hope** (of the kingdom on earth with Jesus as king!) that he was bound with the iron-chain, Acts 28:20.

We Gentiles were *not into this equation* at all then. Paul made appointment with the **Jewish religious leadership at Rome**, and not us Gentiles!

#### THE CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHANGE OF DISPENSATIONS IN ACTS

It is obvious that the meeting in Rome in the spring of 60 AD was a fact. And in that occasion it happened that God bade Israel farewell as He looked upon His nation as fallen from their standing with Him. It was a clear demand from God that Israel had to repent and believe on Jesus ALL OF THEM – the entire nation. Had they done that, then God would have sent Jesus back down to establish the promised kingdom. Peter's speech in Acts 3 cannot be misunderstood, saying – **“So repent; turn around, and return, that your sins may be erased, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; - - And that He may send the Christ, Who before was designated and appointed for you – even Jesus, - - Whom heaven must receive until the time for the complete restoration of all that God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets for ages past.”** (Acts 3:19-21)

Peter did not speak of a Second Advent, like, far into the future...up to our time, no, - he spoke from out of the premises that *His coming was imminent* - in that He would return the very day that God could see Israel's full conversion!

And Paul in that meeting in Rome in 60 AD became the 'end station' for Israel, the point of no return. It was their last opportunity to say yes to Jesus as Messiah!

It happened, according to Flavius Josephus, the history writer, that *Procurator Porcius Festus* took ill and went back to Rome for cure at the same time of Paul's staying in Rome. In 63 AD when Paul wrote the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. Festus went to Rome - but he died of his illness say the history. However, Festus' absence from Jerusalem made the priesthood there using the opportunity to deal with Jacob and the elders in the assembly, and Ananias II (who had slapped Paul in the face) the High Priest arrested them and they was stoned to death. The assembly of believing Jews and proselytes fled the town, and settled in Pella, except for a few members. So this 'timing' - of Paul getting a rejection from the leaders in Rome, and at the same time at Jerusalem the believers in Jesus were killed, added up in God's sight as something so *serious a sin* that God *broke all bonds He had with Israel*, and He considered them as fallen from Him.

The preaching of the Kingdom of God on earth was totally ended. But now Paul came forth with the freshly revealed free Gospel of Grace! And he did so, long before Matthew's Gospel hit the market in 80 AD, Mark in 83 AD, John in 90-92 AD and Luke in 73 AD (some thinks it could have been in 62-63). Paul's Grace Gospel, as laid out in Ephesians and Colossians, became the dominant teaching and doctrine of faith in the Provinces. Unfortunately there exists no evidence proving that this Grace Gospel ever was preached in Jerusalem and Israel's land. What hit Israel was *not* the Grace Gospel, but it was *doom and destruction*, as the Roman army took them in 70 AD.

It was around 66 AD - almost six years after Paul's confrontation with the Jewish leadership at Rome - when the result was that Israel fell away from God, it was that the rebellion against Rome was initiated in Jerusalem and it spread around in several fractions inside Israel. And it all ended in 70 AD, almost a **decade** after Israel's spiritual fall from God as His nation. (It is well known among historians that the rebellion got on because of two Rabbi/Scribes fired up hatred against Rome, propagating themselves as 'messiah' for Israel. They were **John of Gischala** and **Simon Bar-Giora**. They were somewhat in disagreement, since both persisted they were sent by God to be Israel's 'Messiah'. They only made peace with one another when Titus and his army started building tall ramps to conquer the wall of Jerusalem and invade the city).

From all of this we can do some reasoning: Considering the

time span between the fall of Israel in 60 AD (Paul in Rome) and the destruction of Israel in 70 AD, almost a full decade...by one month only...it is fair to say that there exist no *sharp cutting-edge* sort of divide in dispensational concerns.

Time had slid pretty conveniently from Acts-dispensation and their Kingdom-Gospel..over into the free Grace Gospel of Paul according to Ephesians/Colossians written in 63 AD. Some Bible expositors tend to make the destruction of the temple *in 70 AD* as the boundary for the Post-Acts grace dispensation to arrive. But if spiritually observed, that new dispensation brought forth by Paul actually started up as he had the revelation of the 'Mystery' (Eph. 3:1-9; Col. 1:25, 26) – following as a *consequence* of Israel's fall in 60 AD in the meeting with him.

Even if Israel fell from God in 60 AD, God *did not send doom and destruction immediately!*

No, He allowed for almost one decade to slide off...and no sharp cutting-edge separation between the two dispensations mentioned. The temple in Jerusalem still stood high, as Paul started to preach and teach his fresh new Grace Gospel in 62-63 AD – until he (presumably) died around 67-68 AD by execution in a Roman jail. The fall of the temple is not the boundary for the Post-Acts dispensation of the Mystery, the 'One new man' of Eph. 2:14, 15. The real boundary was the fall of Israel in 60 AD, but God having it all slowly-but-safely slide ahead over a time-span of 10 years.

Inside Israel, it still was the Tora and the Mosaic doctrines which held the ground; Paul's grace gospel probably *never reached Jerusalem and Israel.* But outside – in the Provinces, particularly in Asia Minor (now Turkey) it was Paul's grace gospel which ruled the spiritual ground. Paul openly *dismissed the Tora, Law of Moses,* as we find it in Eph. 2:14, 15.

There exist no Biblical scriptures/epistles proving that Paul's grace gospel ever was preached inside Israel. Think about it for a while.



But as Paul started to preach/teach in 62-63 AD and on, until his death in 67-68 AD, NOT IN ISRAEL (!) but in Asia Minor, this was the public presentation of the Grace Gospel we read from Ephesians/Colossians. It became a new dispensation – as Paul formulated it in Eph. 3:1-5 ...*assuming you have heard of the stewardship (Greek, **oikonomia**) of God's grace that was entrusted to me for your benefit.*

Now it became a sharper *doctrinal divide*, between the previous dispensation with the Tora and Law of Moses – up against Paul's *free grace gospel*, in which he openly

declared that the Tora was abolished! It was actually abolished even if the temple at Jerusalem was still standing! It was a divide, yes, but it took some time to fully make this effective among believers.

WILL THE SAME PRINCIPLE OF 'TIME SLIDING'  
BE PRESENT CONCERNING THE CONCLUSION  
OF THE CHURCH DISPENSATION?

This question is a good one. But I cannot guarantee that the reply will be just as good. After all, I am only a regular human being, a believer in Jesus Christ, and not an apostle or a prophet.

But we have the Bible, and we also have the actual history written in books.

If you read my article on "Daniel's Seventy Weeks", you will find Biblical proof quoted regarding our time-frame and the conclusion of our dispensation – followed by the Great Tribulation for Israel spoken by the prophets, by Jesus, and by His apostles.

That time-frame or calendar is based in particular upon the writing of Hosea, God's prophet to the Northern Kingdom (the ten tribes of Israel). He ministered in 750 – 722 BC, in the time of King Jeroboam II (785-745 BC).

He came up with an exact time for when Israel in the future would be 'revived' back to existence as a nation for God, after first having been destroyed completely (as in 70 AD).

He prophesied of the so-called 'Three days' – which is three millennia. 2000 years would pass before God revives the nation, and as the third millennia starts up, Israel shall live in the presence of the Lord. This will be the millennial kingdom of God on earth, and Jesus as King in Jerusalem.

I call this for "The Hosea Clock" – because it contains an exact time of years to be fulfilled...which can be calculated from using the Jewish calendar.

From what calendar day must we base our calculation?

It has to be from the actual day in history on which they were destroyed as a nation. That was same calendar day as when the Babylonian king took Jerusalem in 586-587 BC:

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> of September**. Flavius Josephus testifies of this in his book, "The Jewish War", saying that the Romans took Jerusalem Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> of September in 70 AD ..as it happened when Nebuchadnezzar's army took them in his time.

Not only did the Romans destroy Israel and their city with its temple, but Caesar had them sent away on slave vessels to Alexandria, Egypt, to be sold as slaves – men and women from the age of 17. But the market collapsed, and they were set free to leave; all according to Moses' prophecy in Deut. 28:68 – witnessed by Flavius Josephus in his book works "The Jewish War". But some of the prisoners of war were sent up to Rome to be cast onto the Gladiator

games and the wild beasts to die.□□

If we count 2000 years from 70 AD in Jewish calendar (a year is 360 days) then we arrive at 2041 AD as the Second Advent – the year when Israel will be ‘revived’ to live before His presence. (Hosea 6:2).

But 7 years before His coming, Israel goes through the purging/chastisement of the Great Tribulation – and in which we, the Church, is not to be found. We must subtract these 7 years and thus we end up with 2034 AD as the latest day for the conclusion of the Church dispensation. You follow me...?

Next move is about to happen...**BUT**□□ ... -□□ *but*□□ can we take this as a sharp cutting-edge divide time wise, positively?

I think not.

It is not absolutely certain that God takes us into heaven in the very same moment in time as the Great Tribulation□□ starts up in Israel.

Like as we have learned above, when a divide happened between the Tora time in Israel, and the free Gospel time with Paul outside of Israel to us Gentiles, -□□ almost a time-sliding of 10 years (!) – it is□□ *fully understandable and probable*□□ that God will be pleased to take us into His glorious heaven, actually in good time□□ *before*□□ the tribulation starts in 2034. The world will have a few years, I believe, to adjust to the new dispensational realities. Grace-time is gone, and Tora time is introduced again...but not as□□ *salvation gospel*, but under doom and punishment for Israel.

Our sudden disappearance from this world will not go unnoticed, it will be, like, as one big warning “Farewell” – from us Christians. “We told you so!” We preached and we taught the gospel for 2000 years...and still, you stubborn unbelieving Gentiles would not receive Jesus as Savior. You tried to ridicule the Bible saying it was all just human fiction, you rather held to Darwin’s theory of evolution than□□ to the creation act of God told in Genesis.□□ You said that any religion may have importance for salvation, as opposed to the Bible which pointed to Jesus as the□□ *only possible*□□ way to God. You craved for a godless world, a world where humanity could do what they wanted.

And so,□□ *our sudden departure into the heavens*□□ will be a grand farewell speech which this world has□□ not ever experienced□□ before.□□ They will be totally shocked and astonished. It may be that more than one Billion believers in Christ will be taken into heaven. That’s a lot of people. The promise delivered to us from God by His apostle Paul, in Col. 3:1-4 will be fulfilled – we shall indeed be□□ *appearing with Christ in glory – in heaven.*□□ This will happen without any kind of forewarnings or signs. Those who died in the faith will be raised from the dead up in the heavens the same day. Paul named this day□□ “*The day of redemption*” –□□ Eph. 4:30.

In conclusion:

Our heavenly glorious salvation into eternal heavenly life, promised by our apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, may probably arrive much earlier than the year 2034 as I mentioned above with the "Hosea Clock".

This is real good news to us Christians – I am complete in favor of getting there *sooner* than later!

And still, we must not give ourselves over to hysterical joy and dancing over the heavenly enthusiasm in these teachings. Not go messing up our private lives selling off and quitting this and that and so forth. No, we can just keep on living our lives, coming/going to work or whatever you are busy with. We just keep on having a joyful expectation of our coming day of redemption.

Most of us think that 12 years (2034, as we now have 2022) is a very short notice to leave for heaven. And if this already short time is made even shorter, let's say 9 years? Or 5 years? ..it will be a short time none the less.

Paul never used any description of exactly which 'method' God will use when taking us into the heavens. I think it may simply be that He – in a split second – just transfer us right into His heaven. There is nothing in particular to be worried about; no sort of frightening scenes, or sounds, or things like that. We will immediately understand that we are in heaven when it happens.

The best hands to be in, is in the hands of the Almighty God, the Father of Christ.

Let us all look forward and upward to the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30).