

Then and Now -- *Studying the Past to Shape our Future*

By Ed Stevens -- Sunday evening, August 8, 2010 (Lesson 3)

Title of this broadcast: *Transition from Old to New (Intro)*

Dispensationalists believe we are still in the Church Age (transition period)
Amillennialists (and some Postmillennialists) believe we are in an Already But Not Yet state

There is a lot of fuzzy thinking going on in Christianity regarding where the Church fits into the Prophetic Plan of Redemption.

One rabbi who spoke on Post-biblical Judaism said that he wanted to begin his lecture with the End of Biblical Judaism (70 CE). Even some Jews recognize that there was an End of some kind in AD 70. This rabbi called it the End of Biblical Judaism and the beginning of Rabbinical Judaism.

The Old Testament refers to the Destruction of Jerusalem as the End of Days, or the End of the Age (or World). The New Testament writers use this same phraseology: End of the Age, This Age and the Age to Come.

Things That Changed During the Transition Period (AD 30-70)

Old Things	New Things
Type	Anti-type
Physical	Spiritual
Earthly	Heavenly
Old Testament	New Testament
Law	Gospel
Legalism	Grace and Freedom
Law-keeping	Love showing
Jewish only (Nationalistic Judaism)	All Nations
Land-based ("in the land")	Christ-based ("in Christ")
Jerusalem-based	World-wide (universal)
Abrahamic Bloodline	Abrahamic Faith
Animal Sacrifices could never remove sin	Christ once-for-all sacrifice and atonement
Worship in Jerusalem (physical place)	Worship in Spirit & Truth (in the heart)
To the Jews First	To all nations now
Circumcision of the Flesh	Circumcision of the Heart
Physical Kingdom	Spiritual Kingdom
Wild Olive Tree	Cultivated Olive Tree
Prodigal Son	Restored Son
Not a legitimate son	Adopted son
Partial Revelation (Heb. 1:1ff)	Full & Final Revelation (through His Son)
Physical Temple (Type)	Spiritual-Heavenly Temple (Antitype)
Under a Curse (Death)	Under a Blessing (Life)
Immature State (Some Things)	Mature State (All Things)
Cast out of the Garden (Alienation)	Restored to the Garden (Acceptance)
Down-payment, Earnest, Pledge	Fullness of Inheritance
Humiliation (persecuted - loss of all things)	Glory (gain of all spiritual blessings)
Physical Nation (earthly citizenship)	Spiritual Nation (heavenly citizenship)
Phys. Land, City, Temple, Priest, Offerings	Spir. Land, City, Temple, Priest, Offerings
Veiled (Hidden)	Unveiled (Revealed)
Mystery	Manifestation
Old Creation	New Creation
Gentiles had to be circumcised (keep law)	Both Jews & Gentiles saved w/o circ./law

I believe the best way to study all this transition is by looking at the book of Acts and seeing how it actually occurred inside history.

Few Christians today understand just how Jewish the first century church was.

The BIG issue for the first century church was whether Gentiles could be saved without Circumcision and Law-keeping – this is a no-brainer for us today, but it was a huge controversy for the Jewish Christians before AD 70. It took them nearly 40 years to finally come to grips with it.

It is clear, from the book of Acts that the Jewish disciples of Jesus misunderstood the Great Commission and how it was to be carried out. They did not realize at first that Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews first.

They knew that the gospel had to be taken to the Jews first, but they did not know that Gentiles could be incorporated into the Body of Christ without circumcision and law-keeping. Jesus left this impression with them through his kingdom teaching, such as what we see in Matthew 5:17-20. Jesus did not spell it all out for them clearly here. There was still much more to be revealed gradually throughout the transition period.

Matthew 5:17-20

- v. 17 - Did not come to Abolish, but rather to Fulfill (fulfill all the promises of the OT)
- v. 18 - Keep every jot and tittle until all the law was accomplished and heaven and earth passed away. There is an unmistakable reference to the law ceasing to be binding upon them after it was fulfilled and when heaven and earth passed. Indeed it could no longer be practiced after the Temple was destroyed.
- v. 19 - Any of the disciples who annulled any of those commandments (and taught others to do the same), even the least of them, would be called least in the Kingdom. Whoever keeps (every jot and tittle) and teaches them shall be called great in the Kingdom. (This was only applicable until AD 70 when it was no longer possible to keep the law)
- v. 20 – until the Kingdom comes, they were to maintain a righteous lifestyle that surpassed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Why was this so important? So that non-Christian Jews would listen to the gospel, coming from Christian Jews who kept the Law better than they did.

Good resource to help understand Matt 5:17-20

Passing of Heaven and Earth – by David Chilton (2 audio tracks on the IPA website:
www.preterist.org)

Good resource to have while we go through these studies of the Transition Period:
FIRST CENTURY EVENTS by Ed Stevens (available on the IPA website:
www.preterist.org)