

Episode # 628 - The Why Question 13: The Long Delay

I. One of the most difficult questions we must ask ourselves regarding God, life, and the world is the “why” question. We who believe that there is a God Who is all-good and all-loving and Who made the world must answer why then this world is such a terrible place and in such a mess.

II. If Christ’s death on the cross, burial, and resurrection were all that was necessary for God to redeem the earth from the mess it is in and make it the way He always intended it to be, then why, now that Christ has done this, does God still delay in bringing in His kingdom? If Christ’s death was all that was necessary to fix everything, then why didn’t He do so long ago?

III. In previous studies, we revealed that God’s plan changed at some point in New Testament after His work on the cross. We found that change when, instead of men being apostles, the gospel itself became the apostle at Acts 28:28.

IV. In Ephesians 3:1-2 we found God’s work today defined: God is working with the world totally in a dispensation (management or administration) of grace and grace alone.

V. The introduction of the Dispensation of Grace delayed the kingdom.

A. Philippians was written shortly after the turning point to explain it to those who had been saved before the turning point and now were trying to deal with the change.

B. Philippians 1:6. The good work completed until.

1. Complete = *epiteleo*, to bring to a full end. *Achris*, “until,” is clearly there in the Greek. How does one complete a thing “until”?

2. Completing a thing until you take it up again is basically suspending it. That is what happened to the good work of that Christ began and the apostles continued, Acts 1:1. It was suspended until the day of Jesus Christ!

C. Philippians 1:12-18 shows the effects of Acts 28:28. Now that it was no longer apostles carrying the gospel exclusively, some were carrying it out of bad motives! Yet Paul rejoices that it is being carried nevertheless.

D. Philippians 1:30. The Philippians had a conflict, a struggle they were dealing with. What was it? The delay of the kingdom of God they had thought would come in their lifetimes!

1. Paul’s words in Acts 14:22 reveal an expectation that the kingdom would come in their lifetimes.

2. I Corinthians 7:29-31 indicate that Paul was expecting a short time until the whole world would change. What change did he anticipate? The kingdom of God!

3. Romans 13:11-12 indicates an anticipation of the kingdom coming soon. It makes no sense unless Paul was expecting it truly soon!

4. In Hebrews 10:25 the author sees the Day approaching. The expectation of the New Testament writers was that the kingdom was coming very soon.

5. Acts 1:6. The apostles had been taught by the Lord for forty days regarding their coming work in Acts. Yet, though they hoped the kingdom was about to come, something in what the Lord said may them question it. Was the kingdom really coming at that time?

6. Acts 1:7-8. The Lord’s answer puts the entire Acts period under a big question mark. The kingdom might have been coming, but it might not. Now, two thousand years later, we know the answer. But when did they know it?

7. In II Peter 3:8-9, Peter speaks to people who think the Lord is being slack concerning His promises. They see the kingdom they were expecting moved far into the future! Yet this is really a sign of God's longsuffering.

8. By II Timothy 3:1, Paul sees the "last days" as being a far future time. That which was near had moved off far into the future once again.

VI. Conclusion: The kingdom of God which will right all the wrongs of this world was delayed at Acts 28:28, and this is why God did not immediately bring in His kingdom in which He reverses all the wrongs that came into the world when Adam and Isha sinned and followed Satan's way. Yet what was the most important work that God wanted to do that was so necessary He delayed His glorious kingdom? We will discuss this in our next study.