Subject: What do we believe?
Posted by william on Fri, 26 Mar 2010 18:38:46 GMT
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(Pardon the formatting!)
Acts 4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom 10:17.

What was it that they believed?

1. They believed that God, the living God had come to be their king--to restore that which had been lost by Adam and Eve.

2. They believed that God had now come to be their atonement.

From the time that Adam & Eve fell, God's redemption was promised both in type and by an actual promise.

a. God told Adam:
Gen 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

b. When Adam & Eve disobeyed, did they die?

i) They immediately were separated from God which caused spiritual death.
ii) We know that they set into motion death in their bodies that would eventually lead to their physical death. But why didn't they immediately die physically?

c. God took two living creatures which were slain on the spot and clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of the slain animals.

i) There was nothing Adam or Eve could say or do at this point to avoid the justice of Godâ€¦ they were as good as dead. If they were to left to themselves they would have had no hope. So God took the initiative and devised a means for them to be reconciled to Himself. This is God's Love in action.
ii) First the Lord, in the midst of pronouncing the curse, gives a veiled messianic prophecy:
Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed

and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

iii) Then God does the unexpected, He provides them with "skins". The blood of these animals (two perfect specimens from His perfect creation) was spilled to:

First. To cloth them. This would become necessary outside of the perfect conditions of the Garden of Eden.

Second. The shedding of the blood of the innocent animals would give them a temporary stay of execution.

From the beginning blood was significant:

Exod 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye [are]: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy [you], when I smite the land of Egypt.

Lev 17:11 For the life of the flesh [is] in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it [is] the blood [that] maketh an atonement for the soul.

God's plan unfolds from the very beginning; certain truths are set forth:

i. The offering of animal blood was necessary to restore the splintered relationship between God and man.

ii. The offering of animal blood was a temporary fix until a permanent solution was effected by Godâ€¦ i.e. God shedding His own blood on man's behalf.

iii. His own blood was the only effective permanent remedy.

This is why the promised seed (to bruise the serpent's head) was such a big deal.

iv) Eve expected that her first child was the promised seed. He was named Cain which literally means: I have gotten a man--the Lord.

3. The restitution of all things essentially meant a restoration of the conditions that prevailed in the Garden of Eden and for that to occur there must be a restoration of the kingship of God AND their sins would need to be permanently dealt withâ€¦ in other words, the temporary solution wouldn't suffice.

This is what salvation is all about. As believing gentiles we wait now for the Jews to accept the promises in order for the times of refreshing to begin. We call it the millennial reign of Jesus ON THE EARTH. A time when the Edenic conditions will once again prevail; brought about by second coming of Jesus!

Millennium benefits:

Isa 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.
Isa 11:7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
Isa 11:8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.
Isa 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
Isa 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.
Isa 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.
Isa 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.
Isa 11:13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.
Isa 11:14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.
Isa 11:15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make [men] go over dryshod.
Isa 11:16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

Isa 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.
Isa 65:18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever [in that] which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
Isa 65:19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.
Isa 65:20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner [being] an hundred years old shall be accursed.
Isa 65:21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit [them]; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

Isa 65:22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree [are] the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

Isa 65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they [are] the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

Isa 65:24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Isa 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust [shall be] the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

In this modern age we sometimes overlook the totality of what the Jews were expecting and limit our preaching by including only a limited gospel. The early Church seemed to focus much on linking the Old Testament prophecies with the unfolding plan of redemption, i.e. the atonement of Jesus Christ.

In other words, they didn't merely preach that a man had recently been resurrected, and that people should believe on this resurrected man and that the belief in this miracle would give them eternal life. They showed the people that this man was in fact God Himself providing a permanent solution to the fallen race of human beings; a plan that He had provided from the beginning; a plan that unfolded before their very eyes, as their own history had shown via the sacrificial system and all of the OT doctrine. God had taken the initiative by showing that the temporary solution to their imminent death would one day become a permanent solution when the time was right, and that only by His grace would they be given a stay of execution. When He sent His Son to provide a permanent remission of sin, then they could expect a restitution of all things, a time when the conditions that prevailed in Eden, would be restored, and the schism between God and man would no longer prevail. As Paul said:

Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Praise the Name of Jesus!

Blessings,
William