

**“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth Demands That We Follow Paul — Part 7”**

Today:

- ***How Would Paul Answer Questions Regarding the “What” and the “When” of the Great Transition?***
- ***Shame and Condemnation Belong to Those Rejecting Right Division***
- ***Blessing and Glorification Belong to Those Loving Right Division***

I. How Would Paul Answer Questions Regarding the “What” and the “When” of the Great Transition?

- ***Right Division as exhorted to Timothy in this letter assumes that that Truth of God is Foundational***

We have seen recently in our studies in Acts and in the epistles how Paul had prepared the believers in Corinth for the change in God’s working soon to come. Today we will relook at those verses that teach not only WHAT will occur with these special gifts listed there, but also as to WHEN. You will remember we spent considerable time in chapter 13 where we found these key verses:

1 Cor. 13:8-10

8 Charity never faileth: but whether [there be] **prophecies**, they shall fail; whether [there be] **tongues**, they shall cease; whether [there be] **knowledge**, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we **prophecy** in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

- ***So the times were changing, Paul wrote here, and those gifts of the spirit so abundantly present in the Corinthian church **WOULD BE SOON PASSING AWAY**. The Signs, Wonders, and Miracles worked by the power of God through those gifted persons would be ceasing altogether. So the apostle wanted to prepare the Corinthians for that day.***

So the “what” question is answered here.

- ***He then answers the question: when will this occur? Many assume here that Paul is writing about Christ’s return***

although that would remove the power of this exhortation intended to be so encouraging. But to say these blessings would not continue after Christ had returned would provide little consolation at that present time. This is so important for us to see and understand well.

- ***Verse 10 then completes the picture:*** “But when that which is perfect [or the complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

What Paul is writing here is that many of those gifts that were so prominent in Corinth only fit within a context of an incomplete revelation from God regarding what he was working out through his grace. And doesn't this actually say just that! These gifts were for the time then but would no longer be needed when the “complete” or the “perfect” had come into being and the former witness through those signs was no longer needed. No more revelation is needed for us. Those gifts have passed away and there is no question at all about that, or shouldn't be.

- ***This should be so encouraging for us today living in the realm of grace WITHOUT the sign gifts and wonders present. But that is not the whole story here. Take careful note that Paul is writing here that these gifts of the spirit would pass away because something far better would come into being soon. But what was that? Does he tell us here?***

He does: It was the completion of the giving of the word of God given to Paul that was the defining event as indicated in verses 9 - 12. Now, when such a miracle as this, the completion of God's word of grace, has been fully accomplished, what remains for us? It is the receiving of that truth, of course. And that takes center stage in Paul's letters of encouragement, doesn't it?

- ***Without receiving that precious teaching, taking God at his word, we cannot receive the Blessings of That Precious Truth:***
 - ***So we have seen how a dispensational change was occurring as Paul carried out his ministry. Those changes were significant in the lives of believers. If we are not aware of this Dispensational change and try to live as if we were living in an***

earlier day — or a future time — we will undoubtedly be living as believers without the empowering of God Almighty. That is a sad situation indeed, but its consequences are inevitable.

Today GRACE is ABOUNDING, not Kingdom Law. THE TRUTH OF GOD IS FOUNDATIONAL. Apart from our understanding of that, HOW CAN WE STAND? Those receiving this teaching (the Word Rightly Divided) may grow and mature in the grace of the Lord and abound in life. The full power of God through that grace is ours, beloved! That is the message of those concluding words in chapter 13 or that letter:

- *The analogy chosen here in verses 11 & 12 is so appropriate:*

1 Cor. 13:11-13

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these [is] charity.

Rom. 8:28-32

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

- *Though our God is still a miracle working God, he is not working as described in the Acts and in the gospels. Even those special gifts of the spirit, so common in Corinth, would soon have completely passed away — that is the prophetic word the apostle communicates so well here. Those powers*

and signs were then and are now no longer needed. Our “Kingdom citizenship” is heavenly, not earthly, and we have gained so much more in that heavenly realm that our joys in the spirit may be full even while we live here in this sin-cursed world.

- ***But in verse 13 he asserts that in contrast some things “were abiding” and would, by implication, continue throughout this current dispensation. They will not be “passing away” or “annulled”. What a blessing it is to know this and to possess this foundation of truth. On this we can surely always stand.***
- ***So in conclusion, we have lost the miraculous signs of the Kingdom that was previously “at hand”. It is no longer since now the Prophetic Calendar has been stopped for a while as grace is poured out on sinners far and wide. We have lost those miraculous signs and the gifts of the spirit even the early Body Church experienced in some places (as in Corinth). We have gained so much more as we have seen. But what have we gained? Well, there are many exhortations in Paul’s letters with promises attached. They are important and so practical for our living today under grace as we see in Phil. 4:***

Phil. 4:6-7

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- ***Timothy had taught in Ephesus for some time the truths of the Ephesian letter. The Great Transition had ended and the time for the fullness of grace had arrived. But would the believers receive that truth and reign in life? Or would they revert to legal and “vain babblings” as verse 16 indicates?***

Rom. 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

- ***The false teachers were promoting much evil but it was all in fact in the realm of empty words and invented religious practices which***

*were of no use spiritually speaking — except in a thoroughly
NEGATIVE sense!*

II. Shame and Condemnation Belong to Those Rejecting Right Division:

- ***Paul's strong exhortations to follow him have strong negative consequences for those choosing not to follow him. Why are they so strong? Well, consider Heb. 10:28 for a moment: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses". And then, Num. 15:31 "Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity [shall be] upon him." And there are others in Deuteronomy that make it clear that being cut off means to be executed. That was capital punishment and Moses' Law demanded it!***

So, considering that Moses was the administrator of the Dispensation of the Law and Paul was the same, that is, administrator, of the Dispensation of the Grace of God, we can see how critically important this teaching of the apostle is. He is the apostle of the Gentiles. Hear ye him! Even the truth of the gospel of grace is ultimately at stake here.

For those rejecting Paul and his word of grace were, the apostle writes, dwelling in a world of shame. When God's word regarding free grace is set aside or mixed with other kinds of doctrine worldly, earthly, cares and much legalism will surely abound instead of his glorious grace and truth!

- ***Firstly, we will look at one's life here and now. What did it mean to Paul when one rejected the Word of Truth, the Word Rightly Divided?***

[READ] 2 Tim. 2:14-18

14 Of these things put [them] in remembrance, charging [them] before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, [but] to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

- **Verse 15 is central here. But verse 16 and the following verses explain why Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth Demands that we follow Paul, leaving the other teachers behind. Here shun = wide berth / profane = no door or no exit / vain babbling = lit. empty sounds.**
- **Verses 16 & 17: How important is it to remain firm and never turn aside? The negative consequence of that is made clear: "... And their word will eat as doth a canker". Rejecting the Word Rightly Divided leads to even more ungodliness and like a cancer only gets worse and worse as it bears its evil fruit. The contemporary church history of the last century should convince anyone of that.**
- **"... striving not about words to no profit, [but] to the subverting of the hearers": Lit. "Overturning" those hearing these false teachings. The Greek word here is the one our English word "catastrophe" is based on!! So the apostle chooses the strongest of words to show how serious it is for the teachers of God's word to turn against Right Division. This affects not only them but also their flocks:**
- **Verse 18: "... Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already ...": Apparently they had denied the literal meaning of the words and had taught that the resurrection expected was only spiritual and had already occurred. In that case many had died with a false hope of the physical resurrection as he also taught about in 1 Thessalonians 4. Actually this is a common teaching today in the churches as many teach that the coming Tribulation and Kingdom are meant only metaphorically and that we are in fact living in the Kingdom today. So very sad is this teaching.**
- **This is ultimately about their shame. The apostle writes that there is shame, either now or later, for those turning aside. Skipping to chapter 4 with Paul's last words before his martyrdom where he writes so bluntly about their ultimate end and their condemnation. This is all about judgment, whether in reference to the Bema Seat judgment for us with lost rewards, or the Great White Throne for others with condemnation in its varying degrees.**

Indeed, their shame inevitably manifests itself in many dimensions as we see in these scriptures and others:

[READ] 2 Tim. 3:1-5

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters,
proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers,
incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers
of God;
5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from
such turn away.

- *We are in the last days, if only we knew it. This is not about morality, by the way, at least not primarily. It is really about spiritual apostasy. Even as for the prophets sent to Israel. Adultery in a physical sense abounded and the prophets take much notice of it. But the real issue at the root of everything else was spiritual apostasy, or spiritual adultery. Shame, shame, shame!*
- *Take note of the emphasis on love here — it is mentioned three times. Oh, to be a lover of God and empowered by the abundance of God's grace instead of what is listed here.*

III. Blessing and Glorification Belong to Those Loving Right Division:

- *The great contrast between those rejecting the Word Rightly Divided and that Word of Truth itself is evident here. In Philippians 3 it is so starkly stated that it is like the difference between black and white:*
- *For those rejecting the Word Rightly Divided, shame for some, and for those who were never saved, condemnation. But for us who love that word and our Lord Jesus without blemish, blessings in this life and glory eternally! Amen.*

[READ] Phil. 3:17-21

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

- *Paul's so compelling words here are striking: "[whose] glory [is] in their shame", "who mind earthly things". The consequence of such false teachings is also equally concrete: Judgments for some and condemnation for others, on the one hand, and a glorious transformation for us dwelling in the realm of grace with its teachings and eternal hope for tomorrow.*
- *This leads so naturally to our final point here today which we should make our major focus from now until our eternal glory is manifest: Their shame and condemnation in contrast to our blessing and glorification! Paul ends his life and ministry with these compelling and powerful words at the end of his second letter to Timothy:*

[READ] 2 Tim. 4:1-5

1 I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the **Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;**

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

- *Verse 1: "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Is this two or only one judgment? The following verses make it clear that there are two:*
 - *"His appearing": Literally, "his epiphany or light display".*
 - *"His kingdom": The establishing of his Millennial Kingdom is referred to here.*
 - *One aspect of the false teacher's doctrine is revealed here and this may be the heart of the matter. It seems to me that these false teachers, in rejecting Right Division, had taken scripture figuratively and thereby had begun to reject fundamental teachings such as that of the Pre-tribulational Rapture among*

others and even the very essence of the Gospel of the Grace of God itself. See Gal. 2:5 and Col. 1:23 for more scripture.

- ***If the objective and literal teaching is rejected, then one ends up with a teaching that reduces itself to “story telling” or “fables”, to use the word he uses here. They were filling the teaching time not with spiritual food and strong doctrine, but with stories. That is so true so often today, is it not? In due time, the true and sound and healthy doctrine is no longer known.***
- ***Verses 2 - 5: Sound teaching and preaching is essential for Timothy as it was for Paul. The enemies of the faith abound and their lies (presented as “fables” == “myths” or “stories”) “scratch” the “itching ears” of many who reject the Truth of the Word of God Rightly Divided. What are they then left with? Legal religion with its lies and compromises and increasingly an abounding worldliness.***

[READ] 2 Tim. 4:6-8

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Tit. 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Application:

- ***Paul is our example in teaching and living under grace. For him every spiritual blessing was in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus and they are ours already as well [Eph. 1]!***
- ***We have lost much from the Pentecostal days and the Great Transition (signs, wonders, and miracles, for example, and other early blessings of the coming Kingdom on earth) but have gained so very much more [1 Cor. 12-13]!***
- ***We have this treasure now but in earthly vessels, as it were — but will we enjoy it fully? To enjoy this treasure we must embrace it by***

faith, we must love the Lord and his workings under grace as Paul did.

- ***But true and authentic love is never cheap - it costs greatly in every case, whether here in a worldly sense or in reference to life and witness for Christ in a godless world.***
- ***We can turn aside. But by the grace and power of Almighty God and thorough an abundance of faith, we shall not!***