

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
The Great Transition, The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace — Part 10
Conflicts and Concessions Lead to Paul’s Second Missionary Journey”***

Introduction:

- ***What have we been seeing here in the book of the Acts of the apostles? The Great Transition. “The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace”. Now, in chapters 13 & 14 the ministry to the Gentiles apart from Israel’s salvation and national witness is revealed. Peter has had such a dominant place in the Acts so far and now Peter and James as we shall see shall give over the ministry to the Gentiles entirely to Paul!! This is so significant in the light of Matt. 19:28, and Matt. 16 & 18.***
- ***So much is a matter of timing. What the Lord is doing is so important to know and sometimes it can only be known step by step as the Lord brings understanding of his great work. We see that here in Acts. One lesson to learn is that doctrines can not necessarily be derived from the historical record as here we see passing away some things and the bringing in of others as God works to transition from the preaching of Kingdom Law (for it was once “at hand”) to grace and its fullness. Paul goes forth to the Gentiles city by city but to the Jews first in the synagogue. Then, when they reject his preaching concerning their Messiah, our Lord Jesus, we pronounce a judgment from God upon them and departs to preach grace to those assembled, increasingly Gentiles as his ministry proceeds from one missionary journey to another.***
- ***So Paul is raised up as Israel is progressively set aside in God’s Dispensational Timing. His Grand Design is revealed one piece at a time during this Great Transition as we see the intricacies of God’s handiwork revealed.***

Review:

- ***The great question was this: Would the ruling Jews, believe or not — that is the question? Unless the timing were prophetically just right, it would seem that they would then NOT believe as Isaiah and Daniel had written so many years before. Paul preached this message in the synagogues when the rulers of the synagogue rejected his message of the risen Messiah.***

Acts 13:40-41, 46 [see Is. 28 & 29, Dan. 9 & 11 and others]

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, **a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.**

...

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

- ***This is so indicative of Paul's ministry in Acts. This is not a hopeful situation, is it? It is a dire warning. The nation of Israel has already suffered that fate it seems. Now what about these in the Gentile lands? The answer begins to be clear as we saw in chapter 14.***
- ***The pattern or theme of Paul's ministry is this:***
 - ***They had gone to the Gentiles apart from the nation of Israel's salvation.***
 - ***They had gone into the synagogues first (implying to the Gentiles later, apart from Israel's rising) -***
 - ***They leave the synagogue and continue preaching and teaching the grace of God and many are saved.***
 - ***They present Christ risen and glorified and offer salvation to those who will believe. His message focused on the prophetic message concerning their Messiah and how those prophecies demanded fulfillment with Christ's resurrection. Those that heard were then exhorted to believe that in Jesus God has fulfilled those prophecies and that salvation therefore is in him. Even the forgiveness of sins and justification "from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses". What a wonderful gospel message this is ... but there was a stern warning attached.***
 - ***So there is a new message — not kingdom law with the Jews (and their leaders, even in Gentile lands) in charge over the Gentiles, but grace, where Gentiles are central AND THEY WILL HEAR IT!***
 - ***And, let us not forget, there is here a new apostle — not of the Twelve but Paul***

Acts 14:1-3

1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands...

- *The theme was repeated ...but the leaders rejected the preaching, the grace of God. They rejected the grace of God. Paul is not promoting his own salvation. There was also the possible stoning but an escape was provided. This then leads to preaching elsewhere as they went city by city.*

But the interruptions to the theme are so bold and so violent ...

- **Paul's First Missionary Journey Continues — The Ministry's Theme Is Interrupted**

Acts 14:8-18

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Acts 14:19-22

19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

- *The theme is repeated here but while in process it was interrupted with stoning. But God saved Paul by bringing his back to life and restoring him to sufficient health to continue his ministry without delay (a great miracle).*
 - *Verse 14: They are called apostles here for the first time. Saul is called Paul in the book of Acts beginning in chapter 13 and called an apostle for the first time here.*
 - *They fearlessly then returned to those very same cities encouraging the saints knowing that much suffering lie ahead for all the saints... and not only would there be violent opposition from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles with their idolatrous religious practices and system.*
- **Paul's First Missionary Journey Continues — The Missionary Journey Is Fruitful**
 - *Though Paul's first missionary journey was beset with many difficulties and challenges, even stoning and attempted stoning, in the end it was counted a great success. The report was made in Antioch from which Paul and Barnabas had been sent forth as apostolic delegates sent out by the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles. Indeed the Lord God had as 14:27 says, "opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles". Praise God. He did this incrementally, city by city, and there were many adversaries, heavenly and earthly.*

Acts 14:26-28

...

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Our Outline Today: Conflicts and Concessions Lead to Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts Chapter 15)

- ***The Pauline Message Revealed – Legalists Oppose God's Gracious Work***
- ***The Pauline Message Revealed – Peter Gives a Witness that Counts***
- ***The Pauline Message Revealed – James Offers Compromise***
- ***The Pauline Message Revealed – A Consensus Is Reached***
- ***The Pauline Message Revealed – Gentile Ministry Continues***

Transition:

- ***We see here in the Acts that after Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, there is a delay in the prophetic program. They dutifully await for the Spirit as Christ requested just before his ascension into heaven. And then the Holy Spirit makes the difference with signs and wonders and direct intervention by the Holy Spirit and then by Christ himself as God calls Saul into service with the Glorious Message of Grace.***
- ***Now we move ahead. Paul's first missionary journey has been accomplished and good reports as to the work of God among the Gentiles has been given in Antioch, but ...***

I. The Pauline Message Revealed – Legalists Oppose God's Gracious Work:

[READ] Acts 15:1-5

1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

- *The question is this: Was the Law of Moses binding on Gentiles? And the larger question: Is the church God is creating under Paul's preaching a part or sect of the church of the Jews? We shall see as we continue in our review of the Dispensational Teachings in the book of the Acts.*
- *Now we have a serious conflict developing though as the issue of the place of Moses Law in the new assemblies must be addressed. Why? Because, as Paul wrote later in Gal. 2:2, it might be that his ministry among the Gentiles would be rendered of no effect or "in vain" due to this required mixing of Law and Grace: "And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." That would be a great challenge indeed for the saints to address and Paul considers it necessary that it be addressed forcefully and immediately. The other leaders there in Antioch agree. The visit to Jerusalem is next on God's calendar ...*

II. The Pauline Message Revealed — Peter Gives a Witness that Counts:

[READ] Acts 15:6-11

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

- *Note that the miracles and signs of speaking with unlearned languages was what convinced the disciples in Jerusalem that this was truly the work of God amongst the Gentiles*
- *Peter does seem here to be grasping on to how God is working under grace in the outreach to the Gentiles.*
- *Verse 11 should seal it as far as Peter's understanding is concerned. There is a humility here that we surely cannot doubt. But does it? We shall see ... But it does appear that much progress has been made with even Peter agreeing that Paul's message of grace is of God (at least for Gentiles and maybe even for Jews as he says here).*

III. The Pauline Message Revealed — James Offers Compromise:

[READ] Acts 15:12-18

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, [Amos 9:11-12]

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

- *Practice, not doctrine, seems to be the issue here. But the real issue seems to be that “Moses is preached” in every city. Why is this a great issue for James? He cares mostly about unity among believers in Gentile lands. Or is this the whole story? Does Peter really understand Amos 9 from which he is quoting here, verses 11 & 12?*

“They were four common customs of the Gentile world, and matters on which there should be a clear understanding. The first does not mean only to refrain from worshipping idols, or eating meat offered in idol sacrifice, but from all the pollutions of the system of idolatry

1-That they abstain from the pollutions of idols. Four items are mentioned, which are all embraced in the apostolic letter as things forbidden.

2-Licentiousness and drunkenness received a sanction from religion.

3-Fornication. Chastity was the exception instead of the rule among Gentiles at this period.

4-From things strangled. Because in strangling the blood was retained in the flesh.

***For Moses . . . hath. There are synagogues in every city. The use of blood would shock the Jews who have membership in these.”
People’s New Testament”. People’s NT***

○ ***Background:***

Acts 11:1-19

1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, *John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

Note: Still, the message is only being preached to the Jews EVEN THOUGH God has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles!!

Acts 10:44-48

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

- *The signs and wonders were “for the Jews” and were convincing here again. For a time, that is. But, as we shall see, this would not continue in the face of much opposition from some in Jerusalem as well.*
- *From now on, Paul and Barnabas Take Center Stage in Jerusalem, But James ...*
- *Proof of possibility in O.T. Prophets - vv. 16 & 17. But it should not be concluded that The issue was whether God would allow ministry to Gentiles in this way since Israel had not submitted to the Lord.*

[READ] Acts 15:19-21 James Presents Old Testament Justifications and Exhorts to Unity

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

- *So they knew that the Law of Moses was not for the Gentiles!*

IV. The Pauline Message Revealed — A Consensus Is Reached:

[READ] Acts 15:22-29 [the letter follows]

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: *[note that Silas is now singled out. He will become very important - see verses 27 & 40]*

23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

- *Peter and James have given over the mission to the Gentiles to Paul! This is most significant. What does it mean? Is it just a matter of timing or something much more significant? Is God revealing his plan for the Gentiles and the Body of Christ one step at a time, progressively, and here it was so important for the future that the Jerusalem church and the Twelve be in alignment with what God was doing through Paul and the Gentiles. This was all implied in Paul's "not in vain" remark in Gal. 2.*
- *Ref. The Noahic (or Noahide) Laws had been passed down from Noah generation by generation from just after the flood (Gen. 9). This is Jewish tradition as revealed to us historically from Jewish documents from at least the second century B.C.*

Circumcision is NOT on the list though six of these seven commandments are repeated in form in the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law. Gentiles that lived according to these principles were called "righteous Gentiles". Rom. 1 makes reference to this.

"Not to worship idols.
Not to curse God.
Not to commit murder.
Not to commit adultery, bestiality, or sexual immorality.
Not to steal.
Not to eat flesh torn from a living animal.
To establish courts of justice."

There is an admission here in effect that Moses' Law was not directly applicable to Gentiles!! So saith James! Placing an unnecessary burden on the Gentiles was not in the best interests of the propagation of the faith, he teaches. This principle is accepted by Paul during the transition period but not afterwards, as he teaches in Colossians chapter 2. All

changes when God has set aside Israel and the Jews completely, Acts 28.

V. The Pauline Message Revealed – Gentile Ministry Continues:

[READ] Acts 15:30-41

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

...

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

- ***This was a consequential decision indeed for Silas. I would assume that throughout his life he reflected this as a significant turning point and a place where the Lord God intersected with his life in a dramatic way. We can look back of the same in our lives, right?***
- ***So the ministry of grace to the Gentiles now continues with the beginning of the second missionary journey.***
- ***Peter and James have given over the ministry to Gentiles entirely to Paul!! This is so significant in the light of Matt. 19:28, and other***

scripture as well. So much is a matter of timing. What the Lord is doing is so important to know and sometimes it can only be known step by step as the Lord brings understanding of his great work. We see that here in Acts. One lesson to learn is that doctrines can not necessarily be derived from the historical record as here we see passing away some things and the bringing in of others as God works to transition from the preaching of Kingdom Law (for it was once "at hand") to grace and its fullness.

NEXT TIME. GAL. 2 COMPARED