

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
The Great Transition, The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace — Part 18
Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules - Part 2”***

Last Time: “Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules”

- ***After Visiting Ephesus, the Second Missionary Journey Ends Triumphantly***
- ***Paul Begins His Third Missionary Journey into Asia Confirming the Saints***
- ***Miraculous Signs Multiply Also for the Gentiles, “To Make Them Obedient”!***

- ***After Visiting Ephesus, the Second Missionary Journey Ends Triumphantly***

Acts 18:18-21

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

- ***He left immediately even though there was an open door of ministry awaiting. But he promised to return and he surely did as we will see in this study. Paul left because he had a responsibility toward the “poor saints in Jerusalem”!***

- ***Paul Begins His Third Missionary Journey into Asia Confirming the Saints in Antioch — but he immediately left for another missionary journey, his third. He traveled back to Ephesus as he had promised he would in Acts 18:21-22. Apollos, a Jewish proselyte, was taught the truths of God’s grace by Aquila and Priscilla.***
 - ***We did stop just for a moment last time to see how a Jewish proselyte named Apollos was saved ... the implication is that he believed also “through grace” as verses 27 & 28 indicate occurred for others to whom Apollos ministered. It surely was the new dispensation of grace that Aquila and Priscilla introduced Apollos to and through which teaching he was saved (or transitioned, for he may already have been saved as a Godly Gentile as it seems to imply here). But our major emphasis was on the miracles God wrought***

among the Gentiles in Asia and specifically in Ephesus and how the ministry to the Gentiles was benefited by that as well as to the Jews. The question “why” is answered in a number of places.

- ***Miraculous Signs Multiply Also for the Gentiles, “To Make Them Obedient” — Acts 19:1-20.***
 - ***As the divine history unfolds here, we now will now see how God worked great miracles through Paul and many, Jews, yes, but also a very great many Gentiles were saved. Unquestionably the signs and wonders did play a key role in this. Understanding that is our challenge for today and as we study the Acts, our most critical challenge. But God has given us the key to understanding this outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Paul’s letter to the Romans, chapter 15 where he wrote all about this very subject. In addition, you will remember that it is also the subject of several chapters in the first letter to the Corinthians:***
 - ***There were many examples of how these miracles were used on this third missionary journey that we considered:***
 - ***Example 1 - Twelve Jewish disciples who knew only John’s baptism:***
 - ***These miracles were not “normative”. It is in First Corinthians that the doctrine of spiritual outpourings is taught and revealed to be merely temporary. That it would be there where the assembly was founded based on the leaders of the synagogue is perhaps significant. But even that church would become predominantly Gentile is short order. These “gifts of the spirit” would be abundantly visible for a time, but would then soon be “passing away” as Paul taught in chapters 13 & 14 where he answers the “when” question:***
 - ***These are very important verses given for our understanding. The timing of the “passing away” of these miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s working is identified here as when the “complete” has come. This is in the context linked to the revealed word of God since knowledge and prophecy are referred to and verse 10 reveals the point in the divine working out of his plan for these “Greeks” to notice that those signs and wonders had completely ceased to operate. Quoting a little later from the prophet Isaiah, Paul answers the question “why?” In 1 Cor. 14:22 [See Is. 28:9-13] “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that***

believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”

- ***One central “sign” referenced here is the pouring out on Gentiles Israel’s special “spiritual things”, like speaking foreign unlearned languages, so useful during missionary campaigns in foreign lands. So, he writes here that signs are for unbelieving Jews and regard the coming judgment for sinners without a savior.***

But Romans 11 has the strongest teaching on this:

- ***So we should expect to see many signs and wonders during this period of the book of Acts — and we do:***
- ***Example 2 - Many Special Miracles Were Wrought by Paul:***
 - ***The signs and miracles were intended then for both Jews AND Gentiles ... AND it is clear that they were multiplied greatly in that period of time. It has been said that the Lord worked more miracles through Paul than through Peter, perhaps twice as many as some have counted.***
 - ***This work of the Lord had ongoing fruit in Ephesus as we read next. Paul was in Ephesus two years and the work brought many to Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. But many Jews still resisted and their opposition was very visible and yet not effective. Satan is never effective when the Lord God is at work.***
- ***Example 3 - Sons of Sceva, a Jew and, as it says, the chief of priests:***

Acts 19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Our Outline Today: “Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules — Part 2”

- ***Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — Israel’s Spirituals Given to Gentiles***
- ***Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — To and Through Elders in Acts 20***

Introduction:

Chapter 19 - First 12 of John’s disciples were brought to faith and miracles (tongues) certified their salvation, presumably before the Jews. Their spiritual

things were given to the Gentiles. Ephesus, 3 mostly in the synagogue, then in a Gentile school for two years with much outreach and much fruit certified by miracles ... Finally seven demonics are delivered and the city is turned upside down since the city was given over to the worship of the pagan goddess Diana with an idol and temple to her located there.

I. Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — Israel's Spirituals Given to Gentiles:

Rom. 15:25-27

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians we find the critical teaching on what he calls "spiritual things" as that relates to members of the Body of Christ. He writes there that ... See 1 Cor. 12:1ff & 14:1ff for the teaching in detail. But it is in chapter 13 where he give the teaching regarding the temporary status of those gifts. As I have taught here before, that teaching is meaningless unless it applies directly to those to whom it is written, namely in this case, the Corinthian believers. When they saw these so-called "spiritual gifts" passing away (and he gives a list of them there), they would be confused and his teaching is meant to instruct them as to what God is doing at that time, and, what he would be (or would not be) doing later.

See also 1 Cor. 9:11 where Paul writes of Spiritual things vs carnal things (offerings) in the church.

- ***Example of Miracles - Part 4 - A Young (Gentile) Man Named Eutychus is Healed: Many earlier examples we have already seen here in the Acts.***

[READ] Acts 20:7-12 [A great miracle indeed in Troas — with a Gentile!]

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

- *In this and the other instances of miracles listed here, God worked without question. Israel's spiritual things were surely given (for only a time) to the Gentiles ...to make them jealous (Rom. 11:11 & 14). This is the key principle in understanding most of the book of Acts though many, even dispensationalists (often called "cessasionists") believe the the only reason for the special miraculous evidences of God's work was the foundation of the church. They miss the truly dispensational character of chapters 9 through 28 in the Acts and the great Transition. Without an understanding of this, the three missionary journeys of Paul and his dual ministerial role cannot be known properly.*

II. Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — To and Through Elders in Acts 20:

[READ] Acts 20:13-17

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

- *The route to be taken and the purpose of Paul's return now to Israel is revealed in verse 16. But, the saints in Ephesus are still very much on Paul's mind. He spent about 3 years total there (see 20:20) and the Ephesian saints were very much on his mind. But reaching Jerusalem quickly was also on his mind — and he had made a vow as well. See Acts 16:3-4, "because of the Jews" to understand*

Paul's motivations in submitting to such a "Jewish" practice. There he recounts how he had circumcised Timothy for that reason. He also writes of how he had baptized some in Corinth for the same reason even though as he strongly testifies that he was not "sent to baptize but to preach the gospel (see 1 Cor. 1:14-16). In all of these things he had become "all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:22, 10:33).

[READ] Acts 20:18-26

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

- *These are important verses. Here we saw the heart of the apostle and in this case, his concerns for the saints in Ephesus. He knew they were spiritually under attack by Judiazers and Gnostics:*
 - *Verse 24 - It was the gospel of the grace of God - not the gospel of the kingdom, that he testified.*
 - *Verse 27 - Paul had taught them more than is revealed here, even "the whole counsel of God". According to the letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians the "whole" or "full" word of God, even the whole counsel of God was taught indicating the fullness of grace as well!*

[READ] Acts 20:28-32 [The Warning and Exhortation]

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

- *Verse 28 - The exhortation and it is a strong one — “Take heed” to “to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Here is the gospel in a nutshell.*
- *Verses 29 - 30 — Evil would arise from within was the warning.*
- *Verse 31 - “Three years” was the total time of ministry then in Ephesus, a long time indeed by any standard. During this time he thoroughly taught the doctrines of grace. The letter to the Ephesians will build on that.*
- *Verse 32 - We shall end here today with this magnificent statement by the apostle of the Gentiles ...*

[READ] Acts 20:33-38

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

- *Verses 33 - 35 - Paul cared for himself and others through his trade of tent making.*

- ***Verses 36 - 38 — He leaves knowing he will never see them again — this side of heaven, that is.***

CONCLUSIONS:

- ***It is the gospel of the grace of God that is to be preached. There were signs and wonders evident during the Acts period surely as we have seen, but there was also an active outreach to the Jews of the dispersion as well as to the Gentiles. Many of those Gentiles early on were from the synagogues as they were proselytes. Therefore the signs were expected as they had been previously taught. That explains so much. As long as Paul is going into the synagogues in each city or preaching to Jews (as in Rome) those things relevant to Israel's promises are what we should expect to see and we do.***
- ***But the prison letters of Paul written last to the churches, for example, Ephesians, or Colossians, show no signs of signs and wonders for these spiritual manifestations had ceased as those letters were written AFTER Acts 28:28, Paul's final announcement of God turning now finally to the Gentiles and away from Israel.***
- ***And the Corinthian letters give us the teaching of Paul regarding the temporary status of this gifts. Yes, Signs, Wonders, and Miracles were very much a reality in the early grace assemblies founded by the apostle. BUT, those gifts were merely temporary manifestation among the Gentiles of Israel's "spiritual things" and were therefore given to the Gentiles to make "Israel jealous", that they might be saved. So be it. Today there can be no formal outreach to Jews as Jews since Paul formally set Israel apart from God's outreach to them in Rome. There is neither Jew nor Greek, all are sinners and all equally have no privileged status before Almighty God. Praise God for his abundant grace. Amen!***