

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
The Great Transition, The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace — Part 19
Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules - Part 3”***

***Review: “Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules
- Part 2”***

Chapter 19 - First 12 of John’s disciples were brought to faith and miracles (tongues) certified their salvation, presumably before the Jews. There were also 7 demoniacs delivered of their demonic possession. The city of Ephesus, even economically, was turned upside down as had many other cities on Paul’s journeys as well, such as Corinth. Israel’s promised “spiritual things” were indeed given to the Gentiles. Even their prophesied “earthly” blessings.

- ***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 & 14 for the teaching in detail. But in chapter 13 he gave the teaching regarding the temporary nature 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.***
- ***Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — To and Through Elders in Acts 20***

Acts 20:15-17

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 in verse 16. But, the saints in Ephesus are very much on Paul's mind. He spent nearly 3 years 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. He had circumcised Timothy for that reason and had baptized some in Corinth for the same reason though he was not "sent to baptize but to preach the gospel (see 1 Cor. 1:14-16). In this he was becoming "all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:22, 10:33). Furthermore, this "because of the Jews" was not only on Paul's part but also on God's, for the miracles and signs were given by Almighty God. What a testimony indeed!*

Acts 20:20, 28-32

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 ...

- *There are several doctrinal points Luke includes in the Acts 20 account of Paul with the Ephesian elders. They are important and fundamental and I list them here:*
 - *Verse 21: Repentance and faith*
 - *Verse 24: The gospel of the grace of God*
 - *Verse 27: The whole counsel of God*
 - *Verse 28: The church purchased with Christ's own blood*
 - *Verse 32: The word of his grace as the instrument of building up the Body*
 - *Such a great summary indeed is given here by Luke. But Paul was teaching and preaching for nearly 3 years in and around Ephesus. How much more he must also have taught.*
- *Take note that Paul had been preaching the gospel of the grace of God, not the gospel of the kingdom — Verse 24. These two gospels must not be confused, for the one demands works of law for blessings and the other offers blessings without works of law. That is the essence of the distinction between law and grace, after all.*

- *He was preaching the kingdom of God, the word used here I believe, in the universal sense and not in reference to the coming Millennial Kingdom. See Rom. 15 for teaching on his calling and purpose.*
- *Paul preached the “whole counsel of God”. In addition to the gospel of grace, Paul, according to Luke in Acts 20, preached “the whole counsel of God”. He was according to the testimony there teaching and preaching for nearly three years. And though he used Ephesus as a launch point for ministry in the entire region, he must have been in the city for many, many months and the depth of teaching must have been profound.*

Our Outline Today: “Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules — Part 3”

- *Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — Through This Letter (and Others)*
- *Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — Their Dispensational Significance*

I. Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — Through This Letter (and Others):

- *Now, as a starting point for our teaching today, let’s reread what Paul boldly proclaimed to the Ephesian elders:*

Acts 20:24-27

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.

- *That is how he left it with the Ephesian elders as he then exhorts them to uphold what he had taught in every way:*

Acts 20:28-32

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.

- ***Now, let's look at this magnificent letter itself for encouragement during dark and difficult days. Note that there are no signs, wonders and miracles referenced in this letter except for the prophetic and apostolic gifts of revelation to his chosen servants. The Mystery is revealed instead! The sacred secret concerning God's work apart from Prophecy's promises of Israel's headship as Prophecy had taught for so long. Here in these letters we find Prophecy vs. the Mystery!***

Our goal will be to compare the Doctrines taught in the letters written after Acts 20 by a number of years, with what Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20. There in those letters written after Paul's setting aside of Israel's national position, we read of grace doctrines that at that point had already been fully set into place by Almighty God. Reading these letters is so different from the short historical overview found in Acts chapter 20 as Luke records it. There we saw five doctrines listed. What do we see here in Ephesians chapter 1?

- ***And as we proceed today, Father's Day this year, let's always be considering this great question: Why is this so important for our understanding? Why is Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth so critical for believers today? That question will be answered today as we consider carefully what Paul actually wrote in these letters written while the apostle was under arrest and awaiting trial by Caesar. Let's begin with chapter 1. And what do we see there?***

[READ] Eph. 1:1-7

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of **our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:**

4 **According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 **Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself**, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein **he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**

7 **In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;**

- ***Our positional blessings in Christ Jesus: 1:3ff***
- ***Our election and calling: 1:4***
- ***Predestination: 1:5***
- ***Full acceptance in Christ: 1:6***
- ***Redemption through Christ's shed blood: 1:7***

- ***This goes far beyond what Luke recorded in Acts chapter 20, doesn't it? There was much listed there but there is so much more here, and in 8 verses!***

Notice the key words & phrases here: in the heavenlies / in Christ / all spiritual blessings / chosen us / before the foundation of the world / predestinated us / made us accepted / having redemption / through his blood / the forgiveness of sins / the riches of his grace. What a list indeed!

- ***And all of this secured "in Christ Jesus"! But the apostle must continue further in this song of praise and will reach a crescendo of spiritual music as he writes these words:***

[READ] Eph. 1:8-11

8 **Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;**

**9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,
according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in
himself:**

**10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might
gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in
heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:**

**11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being
predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all
things after the counsel of his own will:**

- *The mystery of his will: 1:9*
- *The dispensation of the fullness of times: 1:10*
- *The granting of an inheritance to us Gentiles (independently of Israel's ministry): 1:11, 14 & 18*

- *Key terms / expressions here are these and more: abounded toward us / in wisdom and prudence / the mystery of his will / according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself / that in the dispensation of the fullness of times / gather together in one / all things / in Christ / in heaven / in earth / in whom also we have obtained and inheritance / according to the purpose of him who worth all things after the counsel of his own will.*
 - *Here we see the revelation of the Mystery Dispensation and all that it means for the saints under grace.*
 - *Again, all is secured "in him", in Christ Jesus! But even more must be added, the apostle would write next:*

- *The goal of God's working grace in us, hearing and believing the gospel, with the sealing of the Holy Spirit: 1:12-14*

[READ] Eph. 1:12-14

**12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first
trusted in Christ.**

**13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of
truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye
believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,**

**14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption
of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.**

- *"In whom" secures even more strongly due the details listed here. After hearing the word of truth the gospel*

of salvation, he adds more and more: to the praise of his glory (not ours) / first trusting in Christ / believing / then sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (the earnest or down payment — literally, here, the Spirit of the Promise, the Holy One) — pointing then forward to the final redemption of Christ's possession, already purchased (through his shed blood for our sins)!! So much doctrine and so much preparation by Paul must have been laid those 3 years for these Ephesian believers to comprehend this well!

- *But how many today even know of these truths? How many pastors teach Ephesians? Or, Colossians?*
- *Then, the final securing truth upon which all else rests:*
- *Our inheritance is secured by Christ's resurrection power, 1:17-23, & the revelation of the church which is his body, verses 22-23*

[READ] Eph. 1:17-23

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- *Finally here, and we must finish today with this crescendo of spiritual song as the chapter ends: the truth mounts literally into the heavenly sphere: IT IS ALL SECURED, ALL OF IT, BY CHRIST'S GLORIOUS RESURRECTION AND TRANSLATION*

INTO HEAVEN'S GLORY.

My, my, this language is incomparable (unless one compares it with others of Paul's teachings, that is): the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him / the eyes of your understanding being enlightened / you may know what is the hope of his calling / what [are] the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints / what is the exceeding greatness of his power / toward all believers / according to the working of his mighty power / which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead / set him at his own right hand / in the heavenly places / far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion / above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come / hath put all things under his feet / gave him to be the head over all things / to the church, which is his body / the fulness of him that filleth all in all

- ***The apostle of the Gentiles implies so strongly here that knowing all of this is critically important. And in reading this, how much can we read without breaking into heavenly music and song ourselves? Without it therefore, what have we lost?? So very much.***
- ***Take note that Paul finishes here with the revelation of the Body of Christ as the capstone in the revelation of Christ and his complementing this eternal plan of redemption and glorification for the Gentiles who are called, the church which is his Body (spiritually, that is).***
- ***The Scripture (Ephesians 1): The teaching here is so encouraging for the saints of God who may be in great trial as far as this life is concerned. For each saint is indeed sanctified in Christ Jesus. That all of this is secured through Christ's glorious resurrection so that during this Dispensation of the Grace of God God may work with such great power to exalt the Christ as Head of the Body over all things filling full the church with hope and grace and a life that is beyond words and full of his abundant glory and grace.***

This means so much that it takes pages to explain it all, even in outline form as we find here. Praise God for the word of the living God! And this is just the first chapter of this pivotal

letter! But we must end here and save the glorious remaining portion for another time soon coming, I hope.

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 those things relevant to Israel's promises are what we should expect to see.***
- ***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, after 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.***
- ***Praise God for his abundant grace toward Gentiles! We are all the beneficiaries. Enjoy and abound in life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Happy fathers day all, and most of all, may our Heavenly Father be blessed now and always. Amen.***

2 Tim. 4:16-18

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.