

Paul the New

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[0 : 00] Wonderful, wonderful passage. And the end result is being able to rejoice and be glad because of what you understand. This was a generation of people that had been absolutely devoid from the law of the Lord.

They had not been exposed to it. And now it is time for a revival to take place in the land. And the way they do that, the way they began, was bring the scriptures, bring the Torah, bring the word of God out of keeping where it had been.

And expose this new generation of people to it for the very first time. This was the word of the Lord with which they were not familiar.

And Ezra the scribe had the responsibility of reading this. Just envision this, if you will. We are talking about several thousands of people.

And Ezra is standing on a wooden pulpit crafted for this particular purpose. And he is elevated above the people so that his voice will carry up and out as he speaks.

[1 : 12] He has the responsibility for reading the word of God. And when it talks about the people weeping, they were not weeping for fear. They were weeping because they had been devoid of the scriptures all these years.

They did not know what God had to say to them. And their weeping were tears of appreciation. Tears, I'm sure, of concern. Tears of mixed emotions going with it.

This was new material to these people. They had not heard this. And we are told that he read from morning until afternoon. And everyone was standing.

They didn't even have hard seats to complain about. They were standing. Listening to the word of the Lord. Thousands of them.

As the day went on, we are told that Ezra had the responsibility of reading the words and making plain the sense.

[2 : 18] He expounded on the text. He told them exactly what it meant. He spelled it out for them so that they got it. And as a result of getting it, processing the information produces in them a feeling, an emotion.

That's the way it works. That's part and parcel of our humanity. We think intellectually. We take in information and we process it. We think about it.

We maul it over. We understand the implications of it. And that is what produces emotions or feelings. Whether they are fear, joy, gladness, sorrow, whatever they might be.

It's all on the basis of the information that you get. That's why information is so critical. That's why understanding information is so critical.

Just hearing words doesn't mean anything. If you're not able to process it, implement it, make a decision on it, and derive some benefit from it.

[3 : 23] That's what this is all about. There is nothing magical or mystical about taking in the word of God. It is what you understand and are able to apply that makes the difference in your life.

And this, I would say, is one of the most pronounced things that makes the ministry so fruitful and so enjoyable.

At least it is for me. And I do not know of anyone other than our Lord Jesus, who experienced that on a different level than what anyone has. But I do not know of anyone among mere men with whom I do not classify our Lord as a mere man.

But I do Paul the Apostle. And he had a ministry and a message to deliver that so burdened him. Because he so desperately wanted his Jewish countrymen, whom he loved and to whom he belonged, to be able to understand the message.

Because you cannot enjoy what you cannot understand. You cannot benefit from what you cannot understand. And I can just see this Apostle's heart longing for an appreciation, a breakthrough in the minds of some of these people to whom he was preaching.

[4 : 48] And another reason that he did was because that's exactly where he was. That's where he was coming from. He remembered how blind he was to all of this truth. How it didn't make any sense to him.

How he was convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah. He was phony. And he had all of those convictions until he came to the knowledge of the truth. And it hit him like a sledgehammer. And now his burden is for all his countrymen to be able to appreciate this same message even as he did. So in an earlier message we looked at the subject of Saul the Old.

Now we are considering Paul the New. And Saul the Apostle, Saul the Pharisee has become Paul the Apostle. He is a new man in Christ Jesus because this same man who wrote this under inspiration said, If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. And Paul could say, listen, I know what I'm talking about. It happened to me. I know how radically changed my life has been as a result of Christ coming in.

[6 : 04] And he is not only a Paul the New Man in Christ Jesus. He is a new apostle to the Gentiles with a new commission.

New apostle to the Gentiles is an office that didn't even exist before. There was no apostle to the Gentiles. The closest thing that anyone could come to an apostle to the Gentiles would have been the ancient ministry of Jonah when he was called of God to go to Nineveh.

And he did with success that he himself regretted. But God was pleased with it. That's about the only example we have, plus a few other isolated ones that we'll be talking about later.

But the Gentiles were virtually out of the program, out of the loop. And Paul himself would describe them in Ephesians 2 as Gentiles without God, without hope in this present world.

That was their plight. And now, this one, Saul of Tarsus, is raised up of God for the specific purpose of being the apostle to the Gentiles.

[7 : 19] An apostle is one who is sent with the authority of the sending one. So that when the apostle speaks, he speaks with the authority of the one who sent him.

In much the same way that our present day ambassadors. We send an ambassador to France or to Great Britain or to Germany or whatever. That ambassador has a residence in that country. And he speaks with the authority of the United States of America behind him. That is an Old Testament or an older concept of an apostle.

And that's precisely what Christ was. So, to get a better feel for this, I would ask you to turn to Ephesians 3. And we're going to be all over the place in the New Testament.

So, let's start here. Ephesians chapter 3. He is not only a new man in Christ Jesus and a new apostle to the Gentiles. He is the administrator of a new dispensation.

[8 : 24] Well, now, what is that? People say, I've heard the term dispensational and dispensationalism. Is that a religious disease or what is it? Well, some might think so.

But a dispensation is a very common kind of word when you understand perhaps some of the synonyms of it. We'll help you to get a handle on what a dispensation is.

In the first place, a dispensation is not limited to a block of time. I know that many have cut their teeth on that definition because they're thinking of Schofield's old seven dispensations that are given in the Schofield Reference Bible.

And I myself cut my teeth as a new Christian on the Schofield Reference Bible. So, I'm fully familiar with the seven dispensations and so on. But a dispensation is nothing more than an administration or a manner in which a government or an entity is administered or doled out or cared for.

A dispensation has to do with dispensing. We're all familiar, if you work in a shop or in a school, you're all familiar with what the dispensary is.

[9 : 44] That's usually where there's a registered nurse on duty and you go to the dispensary and what does she do? She dispenses. She dispenses medication.

She may dispense a vaccination, whatever it is. She is doling out something, giving out something, dispensing, administering, providing.

A dispensation is a time or a description of a manner in which a thing is carried out. Every four years, we have a change in the dispensation of our government in Washington, D.C.

It is a new administration. Same idea of a dispensation. And what the administration does is it dispenses.

It dispenses government. It dispenses laws and rules and regulations and benefits. It is a time of doling out. We even use the expression on the dole.

[10:52] It means those who are on the dole are recipients. They are receiving something that has been dispensed. So, reading Ephesians chapter 3, Paul tells us a little bit about what's going on.

For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles. Now, who is it that had been on the center stage of activity in the plan and program of God up to this time?

The Jew. The Jewish nation. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their seed. They have been front and center. Where have the Gentiles been?

The Gentiles were consisted of everyone that is not a Jew. Which means the vast majority of the world's population. Up until this time, the focus was all on Israel.

The Jew. The center of God's plan and program. But when the Messiah came, they rejected the Messiah. God took the nation of Israel, set them aside in judicial unbelief.

[12:09] They are under divine discipline. And part of the discipline is to be scattered throughout the nations of the world. And God reaches down and brings together a whole new administration.

Or a whole new dispensation. And it is called the dispensation of the grace of God. The dispensing. The doling out of the grace of God. As it is going to be expressed through the pen and the preaching of Paul the apostle. Because he is the apostle to the Gentiles.

He is the apostle to everyone who is not a Jew. But, it's somewhat complicated because he is a Jew. He is a Jew.

Well, Jonah was a Jew when he was sent to Nineveh. And what was Nineveh? It was as un-Jewish as you could get.

[13:14] It was purely pagan, polytheistic. But, a Jew was sent to them. And, Paul is a Jew. And he is raised up of God to go to the non-Jews.

But, because he is still a Jew. And by the way, Paul did not somehow stop being a Jew. He never did. When a Jew, when a Jew comes to faith in Jesus Christ as his Messiah and Savior, he doesn't cease being a Jew.

He is still a Jew. If you are of German heritage and descent, and you put your faith and trust in Christ, you do not somehow cease to be a German.

You're still German, or Dutch, or whatever. It is that something is added. And what is added, of course, is this new faith in Christ.

So, Paul, being a Jew, and having been blinded earlier as a Jew, and having been so completely out of it and contrary to Christ, when he came to faith in Christ, he realized this great pit from which he had been digged.

[14:34] And he had a heart of sympathy and compassion for all of his fellow Jews who were just like himself, just as he once was.

And that's why he never lost his burden for them. And now, here in Ephesians chapter 3, he is explaining this somewhat. I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you, that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

And, by referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men.

Now, there are several aspects to this mystery. But one of the things the mystery entails, of course, is the blending of Jew and Gentile into one body. In connection with the mystery of Christ, that which is revealed concerning that has to do with the very fact that it was the crucifixion of Christ. The putting of Christ to death on a Roman cross that turned out to be the very basis for the deliverance of the whole world.

[16:12] Nobody ever saw that in advance. And when Jesus was on that cross, dying for the sins of the world, your sins and mine were being placed upon him, I dare say there was not anyone, there was not anyone at the foot of the cross, not his mother, not John the Apostle, not anyone else, who could look at Jesus suspended there on the cross and say, it is a tragedy what is happening.

But at the same time, it's a wonderful thing. Because in the death of Christ, God is going to conquer death for all humanity.

They never dreamt that. Never entered their mind. That was not revealed in that way before so that they could appreciate it. They just saw the death of Christ as something to weep and wail over and be sad.

And nobody, nobody there had any clue that there was going to be a resurrection. Sad as the crucifixion is, it'll be wonderful three days later when he's raised from the dead.

Boy, that'll sure be a happy... Nobody was thinking that. That was all hidden. Not to be revealed until it actually happened. At least not in any way that anybody could put a handle on and understand.

[17 : 42] So that's the very mystery. That which appears on every level to be nothing but pure tragedy, pure disaster, becomes incredibly wonderful salvation.

But it is a mystery because it is not known, understood, or appreciated until it is revealed. In other words, nobody could figure it out. Nobody could sit down and draw a blueprint and say, Aha!

I see where all of this is going. I understand it all. And when a Jew would read Isaiah 53, He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

There wasn't a Jew anywhere that read that in Isaiah 53 and said, I know what that's talking about. That's talking about the Messiah. No. Never saw it. Never dawned on it.

Never dreamt of it. But in the mind and plan and program of God, it was there all the while. But they wouldn't get it until it was revealed.

[18 : 43] How that by revelation. That's what Paul means when he says, How that by revelation. Verse 3. There was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

And by referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.

So you see, previously, not known, not understood, not appreciated, but now, it drops like a bomb. And it is the most glorious news the world has ever heard.

And he devotes his entire life to the proclamation of this message. Christ died for our sins. Incredible.

And now he is going to spell out in verse 6 the implications of this. To be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

[19 : 57] Gentiles? But they are dogs. They are the uncircumcised filth of the world.

God wouldn't want to have anything to do with Gentiles. So, what was the Jewish position regarding Gentiles? It was reflected in the prayer that a faithful Jew offered every morning upon arising.

Oh God, I thank you that I was not born a woman, a slave, or a Gentile. Now, you talk about arrogance.

That is arrogance on steroids, isn't it? That was the attitude. Complete disregard, contempt, disgust, revulsion for Gentiles.

And one of the reasons they were called dogs was because a dog would eat anything. So will a Gentile. So they called them dogs. They didn't even have sense enough to stay away from pork and shrimp and lobster and all of that good stuff.

[21 : 06] I'd like you to look at, let's go back to the Gospels for just a moment. I want to give you another illustration about the attitude toward Gentiles.

Let's go back to Luke chapter 4. This is a fascinating passage. One of my favorite passages in all of Scripture. And I know you think that I say that about every passage that I turn you to, but that's the way I feel about it at the moment.

This is local boy makes good. Early on in the ministry of Jesus, he'd just been baptized by John and he returns to his hometown where he grew up in Nazareth. And this is just an electrifying account.

And we read in Luke chapter 4 in verse 16 that Jesus came to Nazareth where he'd been brought up and as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read.

And by the way, the passage that Gary read from Nehemiah, you'll note all the people stood and they still do in the synagogue today. they stand to read and everybody stands as the word of God is read and then as it is expounded why they are seated.

[22 : 23] And they bring out the scroll, this is the Torah, they go to the cabinet in the back where it's kept and two big scrolls and they come out and unwind it and he unwound it to the place of

where he opened it to the book of Isaiah and he found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

And remember now, this is in the scroll of Isaiah which was written 700 years before Jesus was born. Now, he has just been introduced to Israel with his baptism, he returns to his hometown, he is 30 years of age and he visits the synagogue on the Sabbath and of course everybody recognizes him, they know who he is, he grew up there in their midst, this is a community where everybody knows everybody and they knew who he was and now he stands to read in the synagogue and he reads from this passage that had been written by Isaiah but it was about Jesus 700 years before his birth and when they would read this passage nobody could understand it.

They couldn't figure out what is this guy, what is Isaiah talking about? Who is he talking about? They didn't have a clue. Well, the one Isaiah is talking about is now on the scene and he reads from this passage and he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind to set free those who are downtrodden to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and he closed the book be more accurate to say he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

Now the time comes for talking. He is going to teach about what he has just read and he does that seated. Sat down and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him eager anticipating wondering what is he going to say about what he just read.

You know one of the common complaints that I have heard from a number of people who have visited other churches is that almost always the scriptures are read but whatever the sermon is or whatever the pastor has to say has nothing to do with the scripture that was read.

[25 : 22] And it gives you the feeling that the scripture is read just as a matter of ritual just because it's obligatory. You're supposed to read some scripture because this is a holy service so you've got to read scripture but then what the pastor has to say has nothing to do with the scripture.

Well it's supposed to have everything to do with what the scripture has said because frankly you don't need to know what I think. It isn't worth any more than what anybody else thinks.

You need to know what God says and what my opinion is on anything doesn't matter because there is so much that I am not an authority on and I'm not an expert on.

And Marietta Seifert bless her heart she gave me the definition of an expert. An expert is well first of all X is an unknown quantity and a spurt is what you get from something under pressure.

So so much for an expert. So who's the real expert? Well everybody is wondering what Jesus is going to say about this passage but I'll promise you one thing.

[26 : 42] They didn't expect him to say what he said. Because he said today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing right here and now.

I can see these people quizzical looks on their face looking at each other and saying did I hear him right? Did he say what I thought he said?

Did he say that he right now here that this is the fulfillment of this passage that Isaiah wrote all of these years ago? And all were speaking well of him and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from his lips and they were saying is this not Joseph's son?

This is Joseph's boy isn't it? And he said to them no doubt you will quote this proverb to me physician heal yourself whatever we heard was done at Capernaum do here in your hometown as well.

Well we know the miracles that had been done there and he said truly I say to you no prophet is welcome in his hometown but I and I want you to understand why we're reading this passage now and follow me very carefully Jesus is speaking and he says but I say to you in truth there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah well who would the widows in Israel have been Jews of course so read on in the days of Elijah when the sky was shut up for three years and six months when a great famine came over all the land and yet Elijah was sent to none of them none of who none of the Jewish widows

[29 : 00] Elijah didn't go to any of them but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon where's that that's in Lebanon on the coast of Lebanon outside the borders of Israel this is foreign territory this is the land of the Gentiles what's he doing there why is he going there if there are widows in Israel in need surely they would come first who cares about widows who are Gentiles let them starve bunch of dogs anyway who cares but to whom did Elijah go he went to Zarephath in the land of Sidon to a woman who was a widow and now in this congregation you can't see it and neither can

I but I can see it in my imagination in my mind's eye I can see in that congregation eyebrows beginning to raise Zarephath Zidon Gentile what's he getting at here what what is this and all at once the tide is beginning to turn the plot is thickening read on and there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet who would these lepers in Israel have been Jews Jews with leprosy well and none of them was cleansed but only Naaman the Syrian who was he he was a Gentile not a Jew he was the commanding general of the army of Syria today as I speak Syria is a nation in turmoil and we have the possibility of another Libya taking place where Moammar Gaddafi was ousted and later killed same thing may be true of Assad who is in power right now he succeeded his father by training he is an eye surgeon he is an ophthalmologist but he is also the president of Syria and he is responsible for the death of hundreds of Syrians who have been protesting the government for the past several months the time may come when he could even be arrested and put on trial if the people overthrow him this is the same place same geography Naaman was a Syrian he was the commanding general of all of the army of Syria and he was not a Jew now this is the second illustration that Jesus has given and it's not sitting very well in fact the place erupts there is pandemonium that breaks out it was bad enough that he was talking about a Gentile woman now he's talking about a Gentile commanding officer of a neighboring army and he is verse 28 all in the synagogue were filled with rage anger revulsion but just a few verses earlier verse 22 all were speaking well of him how has the tide turned what caused this audience to get so hostile you would think that he had just gravely insulted them and all he did was say that

God has a compassionate heart for Gentiles well if that doesn't beat all can you can you believe that that God cares a whip stitch for Gentiles we are his chosen people we are the apple of his eye all the rest of them are fuel for the fires of hell that's all they're good for and that again is that arrogant speaking and now they rise up cast him out of the city led him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built in order to throw him down the cliff good grief let's let the punishment fit the crime is the crime so heinous that all he has done all he has done is point out two historical examples of God favoring non-Jews- and caring for them how can this be now does this give you any appreciation at all for the extreme hatred that existed in the hearts and minds of these people for those who were not their kind you know this is the thing that has plagued humanity from time immemorial it is a hatred of others who are not like us because we know for sure they're not as good as us nobody could be as good as us right everybody else is to be put down rejected marginalized we are the people and let me tell you something

[35 : 10] I consider myself a loyal patriotic American but we've been bitten by the same bug we can think that our way is preferable our morals our well I wouldn't I wouldn't say our morals but you know the American way and the American way of thinking we just know this is the greatest country in the world just ask anyone who lives here who is patriotic of course not everybody feels that way here but that's that's the natural kind of thinking that do you think that this is new this has been around for thousands of years this is the way people this is the basis of prejudice this is the all prejudice all prejudice is based on two things that produce it it's ignorance ignorance and arrogance ignorance and arrogance ignorance means you don't know and arrogance means that you capitalize on what you don't know and make a big deal of it and it gives you bragging rights or whatever this is part of the human dilemma it has always been in force and it still is and we have to deal with this all the time can you not appreciate come with me to

Acts chapter 13 Acts chapter 13 this is this is such a remarkable passage 13 begins the discussion a revealing of Paul and Barnabas being called to the mission field this is before they make their first missionary journey and here they are called in chapter 13 and in verse 2 they are reminiscing and fasting the Holy Spirit said set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them when they had fasted and prayed they laid their hands on them and sent them away being sent out by the Holy Spirit they went down to Solution from there they sailed to Cyprus and then they reached Salamis and began to proclaim the word of God now note where are they proclaiming it?

in the synagogues of the Jews and in my estimation this is an example of the oft repeated phrase that Paul uses that the gospel of the grace of God is designed by God to go to all the world to the Jew first and then to the Gentile because the Jew did have a position of primogenitor the Jew does have a a position of priority from the standpoint of having that covenant relationship with God that no other nation on earth had and then when the Messiah came they were entitled to a hearing of it

and indeed they got one and they they've got it more occasions than one in the synagogues of the Jews and they also had John as their helper and they run into some conflict here with uh Sergius Paulus a man of intelligence and so on and Elymas the the uh sorcerer and we can't get bogged down in that but I want you to come down to verse 13 same chapter

Paul and his companions put out the sea from Paphos and came to Perga now these are real places these are real places and they're still there today and they can be visited today John left them and returned to Jerusalem but going on from Perga they arrived at Pisidian Antioch and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down and after the reading of the law and the prophets the synagogue officials sent to them saying brethren if you have any word of exhortation for the people say it this now this this is this is marvelous one of my very favorite passages Paul is a stranger in town and he go to the synagogue and one of the ways that they honored and welcomed strangers was by giving them the privilege of reading from the Torah from the book of the law and here's a new guy in town and you want to honor his presence and you give him the scroll and he reads from it and we read that after reading verse 15 after reading of the law and the prophets the synagogue officials sent to them saying brethren if you have any word of exhortation for the people do you folks who are visiting us today do you have anything that you would like to say to the people in connection with the passage that was just read and Paul says well I just might have something to say and he stood up and motioning with his hand he said men of Israel and you who fear God there's two classes of people who's he talking to he's talking first of all to those who are born and bred

Jews and he is also talking to Gentiles in the congregation who are God fearers a God fearer is a Gentile who rejects the idea of there being multiple gods embraces the idea of there being but one God and that is the God of Israel they are called God fearers Cornelius in Acts chapter 10 the Roman centurion was a God fearer it simply means that you subscribe to the teachings of the law of Moses and the God of Israel and you repudiate the pagan gods and the deities that so many of your fellow Gentiles believe in and you even show your sympathy and support by going to the synagogue listening to the teaching learning about the God of Israel and giving your alms there supporting it they are called

[42 : 01] God fearers they are not proselytes because a Gentile who is a God fearer and wants to go all the way and become converted to Judaism has to submit to circumcision you cannot be a Jew if you are not circumcised you cannot be converted to Judaism if you are not circumcised so a God fearer could be a candidate for circumcision one who is thinking about it and every man can identify with the need to give that careful thought and deliberation before you do something so these are God fearers who are there and they are those whom Paul is addressing and he says the God of this people Israel chose our fathers of whom is he referring Abraham Isaac and Jacob all of whom have been dead for a couple of thousand years when he says this the God of this people

Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt now he's giving a little brief rehash of the whole history of the nation it starts way back in Egypt and everybody is sitting there and they've listened to this story and they've heard it recounted before and he goes on through and he comes up to the judges and he comes up to David and he's coming down through the chronology of history and all the rest of this and then in verse 23 he talks about from the offspring well let's read verse 22 after he had removed him that is Saul the king of the benjaminite after God had removed Saul from being king he raised up David to be their king concerning whom he also testified and said I have found David the son of Jesse a man after my heart who will do all my will all of these Jews are there in the synagogue audience nodding yes yes yes we know all about David we know about Saul we know about David he was a king he was a great guy he killed the giant he's been dead for a thousand years and Paul keeps right on going with his history lesson and he says speaking of

David from the offspring verse 23 of this man David dead and buried a thousand years ago from this man David according to promise God has brought to Israel a savior Jesus after John had proclaimed before his coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of his now note John did not proclaim this to everybody wasn't everybody's business he proclaimed it to all the people of Israel and while John was completing his course he kept saying what do you suppose that I am I am not he in other words John the Baptist is saying I'm not the Messiah but behold one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie brethren sons of Abraham's family and those among you who fear God to us the word of this salvation is sent out for those who live in

Jerusalem and their rulers recognizing neither him that is they did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath you read these things every Sabbath you read from the prophets and you never got it never understood it went right over your head nor did they understand their utterances which are read every Sabbath they fulfilled these same utterances by condemning Jesus because the prophets said he would be rejected and despised and a man of sorrows wounded for our transgressions and they didn't even know it they were fulfilling what the prophets said didn't have a clue though they found no ground for putting him to death they asked

Pilate that he be executed and when they carried out all that was written concerning him they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb but God raised him from the dead and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem the very ones who are now his witnesses to the people and we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that he raised up Jesus as it is also written in the second psalm thou art my son today have I begotten thee and then in verse 37 he says he whom God raised did not undergo decay Jesus let it therefore and now here's Paul here is Paul's grand conclusion he's given him this history lesson of Israel's past and he promises that God made through the prophets and he said they have now been fulfilled and he is now bringing them right up to speed to where you are right now and that present audience right before him had to be on the edge of their seat they are on the cutting edge of what

[47 : 50] God is doing right now and he says therefore verse 38 my conclusion is this let it be known to you brethren that through him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and through him everyone who believes is freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses wow is this true I can just see these people wondering could this really be is this the way it is and there's going to be a mixed opinion that will surface from this and we read that in verse 42 as Paul and Barnabas were going out the people kept begging begging that these things might be spoken to them the next

Sabbath I've had people give me requests for speaking someplace but nobody's ever begged me yet but you know something if one has information this vital this life changing it needs to be begged to hear it they kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next we've got to hear more of this and the meeting of the synagogue had broken up many of the Jews and of the God fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas they just didn't want to let go of these guys they had this information and they were so hungry they were speaking to them they were urging them to continue in the grace of God and they were all assembled to hear the word of

God and when the Jews saw the crowds they were filled with jealousy why made them look bad here are a couple of strangers a couple of nobodies wander into town stand up and preach this stuff on the last Sabbath and everybody's talking about it and now everybody turns out to hear them have you ever heard of professional jealousy Billy Graham had to deal with that for his whole ministry it's amazing how many people bad mouth a successful evangelist or preacher and have to point out all of their flaws and all of the doctrine and all of everything that they're wrong and blah blah blah blah because all the while they've got a fleshly problem of jealousy it's called professional jealousy and these

Jews people never turned out like that for them and they began contradicting the things spoken by Paul and were blaspheming and here is Paul's response Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly not timidly boldly forcefully and said it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first because God said it was to go to the Jew first and it's gone to you and you've heard it but since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life disinterested not involved don't want to hear it get out of here behold we are turning to the

Gentiles there are those who will reject the message there are those who will receive the message you give everybody an opportunity to hear to deal with the truth of it and if they reject it you just go on to someone else because there are those who will receive it and those who reject it may be graciously visited with a positive crisis in their life that can cause them to reverse themselves because Christ reaches more people in the midst of a crisis than any other time a crisis is when you come to the end of yourself and you see no way out someone has said that man's extremities are [53 : 32] God's opportunities and all I want you to get from this message is the radical distinction biblically that existed years and years ago still does between Jews and Gentiles and the fact that Paul is raised up to be the apostle to the Gentiles which was an altogether new deal no one ever

imagined anything like this but that's his commission and that's his calling and he is going to make the most of it despite the fact that even some Christians today depreciate the ministry of Paul thinking that somehow or another too much is made of this man but let me tell you something Paul deserves to be made much of because no one made more of

Christ than Paul and that's why we need to give his writings very very serious consideration as the apostle to the Gentiles he wrote these wonderful letters that we have to the churches they are referred to as Pauline letters written by Paul under the inspiration of the Spirit of God for a specific group of people those who comprise the body of Christ and we have just touched the tip of the iceberg with this study and I think you will gain a deeper and fuller appreciation not only of Paul the man but of his message and of his relevance and critical nature for the whole world today pray with me please father we are so grateful for what you have been pleased to reveal because there is no way that we could ever figure these things out or understand them or even imagine them except that they are here provided for us in the clear pages of scripture we bless you not only for the truth that was exhibited back then and the effect that it had but for that resident power that is in the gospel being just as valid and just as strong and mighty today as it was then enable us we pray as we pursue this study to engage these texts in a way that would be honoring to you and enlightening to your people we bless you for it in Christ's wonderful name amen