

# Chronology, Ethnicity and Transition, Part 7

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Chronology, Ethnicity, and Transition. I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians, and we'll be in 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

And there we'll be looking at verses 14 through 21.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.

And he died for all, so that they will live, might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Therefore, from now on, we recognize no one according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ, according to the flesh.

[ 1 : 1 9 ] Yet now we know him in this way no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.

The old things passed away. Behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Namely, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them.

And he has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ.

As though God were making an appeal through us, we beg you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

[ 2 : 3 3 ] He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

We are dealing principally with the subject of transition.

And the passage that Gary just read is that which is on the far side of the transition, and it is injected historically into a situation in the first century that made it for the Apostle Paul to be a very, very hard sell.

And the reason is quite simple. When the Apostle comes on the scene with this message of grace, which literally means, I guess someone came up with it acrostically, G-R-A-C-E literally could stand for God's riches at Christ's expense.

And that's essentially what grace is all about. And it was a hard sell when Paul preached it, and it is a hard sell today for the simple reason that in our fallenness and in our humanity, we are locked in to operating on the system of works, on the basis of performance.

[ 4 : 1 8 ] And you get what you deserve. But grace comes along and says, no, no, you don't get what you deserve. You get what Christ died and paid for to give to you as a free gift.

That's why it's called good news. That's why it's called the gospel. It is not only good news, but it is the best good news that this world has ever heard.

And the little track that I'm working on now, that I'm trying to rewrite, and the difficulty in writing tracks is that you have to be very meager with your words.

And like all preachers, I tend to get kind of wordy, you know. Some of my preacher friends say, why use two or three words when ten will do just as well? And so you've got to boil it down and boil it down.

And that's what we're trying to do. But what I'm calling this little tract on the face of it, it will be, if it sounds too good to be true, and if you were to finish the rest of it, it would be, it probably isn't true.

[ 5 : 30 ] But as they go on and read the rest of it, and I trust they will, they will discover that even though it does sound too good to be true, it really is true.

And that is brought out in a devotional that Marie and I read just recently from the pen of Cornelius Stamm, and there's a stack of his books back there that's called Two Minutes with the Bible, and it talks about on October 9, this is an insert in your bulletin too, by the way, wonderful news.

And indeed it is, and I want you to read it. Don't read it now. I want you to read it later. As well as the other, forgiveness on the flip side, forgiveness that cannot be revoked.

And you know, it's just, a leading psychiatrist was once heard to say, if we had a way of releasing people from guilt and fear, we could just about empty our mental institutions.

That's what so many people are dealing with, is guilt and fear. And yet the gospel is designed to address those very things among a whole host of other things.

[ 6 : 43 ] So the subject of forgiveness, which happens to be mankind's greatest need, is something that is available only through the finished work of Christ. And I want you to gain an appreciation for the fact that this gospel of the grace of God has always been a hard sell and will continue to be a hard sell by its very nature because it does sound too good to be true.

And upon hearing it, some people respond by saying something like, well, that's too easy. That's too easy to just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be safe. That's too easy.

And I agree with them. I say, well, it is easy. But Jesus already did the hard part. And my, oh my, is there ever a ton of truth in that?

You see, God did the very most that he could do in the giving of his son so that he could require from us the very least that we could do.

That's why it's called a gift. How hard have you ever had to work for a gift? Now, you may work hard for what you earned.

[ 8 : 02 ] You may work hard for your wages. But if you talk about working hard for a gift, then it ceases to be a gift. Something you have coming. But the gospel of the grace of God is not only a gift, it is the gift of eternal life.

And it is all wrapped up in the person of this son of God. And I'd like you to turn, if you would please, to Acts chapter 13.

And we will see how Paul had a difficult time preaching this gospel. And it is amazing because he being a Pharisee, the Pharisees, the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day and all the rest of it.

If there was anybody who was deeply embedded in the work system, dotting the I's and crossing the T's and everything that Judaism required, Saul of Tarsus was your man.

And he gives his testimony to that effect that we won't take time to read, but it's in Philippians chapter 3 where he gives his pedigree. And what we've got here in Acts chapter 13 as we open this text is the Apostle Paul and a co-worker by the name of Barnabas is going to be going with him.

[ 9 : 26 ] And he is launching his first of what will be three different missionary journeys. And what I really want to emphasize with this is not only the message, but the time frame that is involved here.

And this is what we're talking about with chronology. When Paul was converted to Jesus Christ in the Damascus Road scene, we are told that three days later, after he had received food and drink from being blinded for those three days, we are told that immediately he began preaching Christ in the synagogues.

Now you've got to remember, he was in Damascus in a foreign country, in the country of Syria. And by the way, Syria today is on the front burner in the news.

And Syria and Israel have gone at it off and on for millennia. I mean, the Middle East is where this thing all began and it's ultimately it's where it's going to end.

And right now, it is a real hot spot. So Paul was in Damascus of Syria at the time and we are told that he began preaching Christ in the synagogues.

[ 10 : 49 ] Now you've got to realize that the core, of course, of Judaism is in Jerusalem. But there were a lot of Jews who were dispersed in several parts of the world, different parts of the world and one of them was Syria.

So they were clear out of the country and Paul went clear out of the country of Israel and went into a foreign land of Syria and Damascus and he found a lot of Jews there and where you find Jews you will find synagogues because the only thing that is required for Jews to establish a synagogue is that there has to be 10 male Jews of age and it is called a minyan M-I-N-Y-A-N and that automatically authorizes them to start a synagogue.

So there are synagogues all over the place and there were multiple synagogues in Damascus and as soon as Saul of Tarsus had his blindness removed and became aware of it really was Jesus Christ that confronted him on that road and talked to him and gave him this commission he began preaching he began preaching the calling and the virtues of this man Yeshua HaMashiach Jesus of Nazareth the one whom he hated previously with a passion and the reason that he was in Syria in Damascus was to arrest his fellow Jews who had fled from Jerusalem because of the persecution partly because of the persecution that Saul of Tarsus was leading and these people skedaddled all the way to Damascus which is a hundred miles plus from Jerusalem and he went to the chief priests in Jerusalem and said they're not going to get away you give me a letter that will introduce me to the authorities in Syria and I'm going after them and I'll round them up and bring them back here in chains and make them stand trial and throw them in jail or do away with them or whatever that was why he went and now after that

Damascus Road experience we are told that immediately he began preaching Christ in the synagogues and what did he preach message was simple it was the same thing that the twelve had preached it was Jesus is the Messiah he is the one promised by Moses and the prophets he came in the flesh to Israel and Israel rejected him and handed him over to be crucified but God raised him from the dead three days later that became the message and you know what that's still the message today that's still the message today now I want you to see what is taking place here on his first missionary journey and by the way be advised if you will from that Damascus Road experience to Paul's first missionary journey 15 years had transpired think of that 15 years between the time of Acts 9 where he was converted and Acts 13 where he is taking his first missionary journey and he began preaching Christ right away there in Damascus but he didn't go abroad with that message to Asia or to Asia Minor and to Europe like he is later going to and here he is at Antioch and this is Antioch by the way in Pisidia and they are sending him forth this is well I'm sorry this is Antioch in Syria there's two Antiochs and that's a little confusing too there's two Antiochs and one is in Syria and Antioch in Syria is of course completely outside of Jerusalem and it is well known as the city where people were called

Christians first at Antioch and it was this Antioch later he's going to visit Antioch in Pisidia which is in Asia Minor but this Antioch here in chapter 13 they are there on the coast of Israel and that's where they're going to launch their ministry from but for time's sake we must come down to verse 13 Acts 13 and verse 13 now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos came to Perga in Pamphylia and John left them and returned to Jerusalem that's John Mark but going on from Perga they arrived at Pisidian Antioch and on the Sabbath day which of course every Jew would recognize they went into the synagogue and sat down now Paul is going to do this in every city that he visits first thing he's going to do head for the synagogue and the reason is quite simple in the synagogue it's where you're going to find Jews and you're not only going to find Jews but you're going to find people who are familiar with the scriptures and when I'm talking about the scriptures in this vein

[16:18] I'm speaking exclusively of the Old Testament because the New Testament had not even been written yet so when Paul the apostle talks about the scriptures it will be as when Jesus talked about the scriptures referring only to the Old Testament so he's reading in the synagogue and after reading the law the prophets the synagogue officials sent to them saying brethren if you have any word of exhortation for the people say it now this is a little strange to us but it wasn't to them because it was customary in fact Jesus did the same thing in Luke chapter 4 when he returned to his hometown they're in Nazareth and the tradition was in the Jewish synagogue if you had visitors strangers people that you did not know and they just showed up in your synagogue for the first time it was considered customary and only courteous to approach them you would assume that they were Jews or they wouldn't be there and you offered them an opportunity to speak now we don't do that here largely because if visitors came in here and I sought them to speak most would be what terrified scared or what unless of course they are accustomed to speaking but most people would be scared to death to do something like that but the Jew had an entirely different mentality and most of them had tons and tons of scripture committed to memory so it was not unusual at all here's these two strangers in town they're there in the synagogue the guy who is the head of the synagogue the custodian of the Torah who keeps it in the cabinet and everything sees these two strangers and he walks over to them and after they read the scriptures from the scriptures he walks over to them and asks them would you fellows by any chance have anything that you would like to communicate to the congregation this morning can you imagine giving an opportunity like that to the apostle Paul and Paul stood up verse 16 and motioning with his hand he said men of Israel and you who fear God two different classes of people when he says men of Israel he's talking about those who are direct descendants of Abraham

Isaac and Jacob they are Jews and then he says and you who fear God these are not Jews these are Gentiles but they are Gentiles who have come to the conclusion that there is but one God not multiple gods and that this one God is the God of Israel and they kind of threw their lot in with the Jews and attended their worship services and they were referred to as God fearers if you read Acts chapter 10 which we won't go there Cornelius the Roman army officer was as Gentile as you could get but he was a God fearer and he is described as such so Paul is addressing the whole congregation men of Israel and you God fearers listen now he is going to give a very quick recap of the whole history of Israel and I can just see these Jewish people sitting there as Paul is talking stroking their beard and going yes yes and they are in agreement with every word that he is saying and they are proud

Israelites they are proud of having come out of Egypt they are proud of their ancestors they are proud of the law of Moses they are proud of what God has done all the miracles that he has performed so read on if you will verse 17 the God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt and with an uplifted arm he led them out of it and for a period of about 40 years he put up with them in the wilderness and that of course relates to their griping and complaining and unbelief and all the rest of it and when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan he distributed their land as an inheritance all of which took about 450 years and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet and I can just see those Jews sitting there yes yes yes we know this we've heard this before yeah and they're agreeing with everything he says and then they asked for a king and God gave them Saul the son of Kish a man of the tribe of Benjamin for 40 years and after he had removed him 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 from the offspring of this man that is Jesse Jesse was the father of David the king and now he's going to drop a bombshell he's going to fast forward from David the king a thousand years and he's going to skip all of the generations in between and he's going to go from David the king to verse 23 from the offspring of this man according to promise God has brought to Israel a savior Jesus after John and this is talking about John the baptizer after John had proclaimed before his coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel and by the way it's really really important to note

John never preached this message to anybody but Jews only Jews if you were not a Jew you were not qualified for John's message this involves the transition also that we're talking about because this is going to be something that will be moving and expanding and it's important that you understand that while John was completing his course he kept saying John kept saying what do you suppose that I am he I am not he people would come to John the baptist because of his message and his message was repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand and if the kingdom of heaven is at hand that can only mean one thing the king is at hand because you can't have a kingdom without the king and he is going to shortly introduce behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world and it will be Jesus the Messiah who just happened to be a second cousin of John so reading on the text they would come to John because of his message and they would say this message you're preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand that's going to be the basis upon which

[ 23 : 46 ] God is going to fix the earth you did know that the earth was broken didn't you do you know that the world is out of kilter the world we live in I'm sure you've suspected that time and time again and because John was preaching that message they came to him and said are you the Messiah are you the one that was promised that should come are you the Messiah and John says no no no I'm not the Messiah but one who comes after me whose shoelaces I am not worthy to tie he must increase I must decrease I am not he but I have come to announce his coming and then he will behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world and Jesus said I am come baptizing that I might introduce him the Messiah to Israel so John the

Baptist to all of the throngs of people who were coming out John the Baptist when he saw the dove descend from heaven on the head of Jesus and the voice from heaven this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased to hear him John's message was here is Jesus Israel here's your man here's your guy here's the one promised by Moses and the prophets thousands of years ago Yeshua Hamashiach Jesus of Nazareth the son of David and listen the burning issue that saturated all of Israel for the three and a half years of Jesus earthly ministry and continued after his resurrection and going back to heaven the burning issue that involved all of Israel was whether or not that was true because if Jesus was the one sent from

God the Messiah the anointed one then he automatically was entitled to your complete obedience without question but if he was not then he's an imposter he's a liar he's not to be believed he's a con man and folks everybody needs to understand it's an either or situation someone said I think it was Josh McDowell in his book said that Jesus of Nazareth is either the Lord a liar or a lunatic and you have to take one of those three you do not have the option for a fourth there is no fourth think of that if Jesus was not who he claimed to be then he deliberately misled the people and he is a liar not to be believed if he really thought he was the son of

God but wasn't he was touched in the head he would qualify for a lunatic he had delusions of grandeur he just thought he was the son of God but he wasn't he didn't know any better and the other option is he is the Lord and for the Jewish people especially not only Jews but for Gentiles as well that's still a hard sell you know because the word Lord implies the supremacy of one beyond whom and above whom there is no other that's what Lord means beyond whom above whom there is no other he is the ultimate and if he is that he deserves your faith your obedience your cooperation he is your

Lord and your master or he is not do you know who most people's master is myself three most important people in the world I myself and me and that's the way the world works and by the way that's a mighty contributor for the world being in the mess it is today self centeredness is one of the principal consequences of the fall and we're all cursed with that so continuing on this is just fabulous material John was completing verse 25 his course he kept saying what do you suppose that I am I'm not he 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 that's what that whole congregation was except for the God fears and those among you who fear

[ 29 : 16 ] God to us that is to us Jews the word of this salvation or this deliverance is sent out for those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers recognizing neither him that is Jesus nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath fulfilled these that is they fulfilled the prophets that they refused to read by condemning him now what Paul is saying here is that the content about the ministry and person of Jesus of Nazareth is found all throughout our scriptures that's the Old Testament but they didn't bother to read it and by the way remember when Jesus confronted the two disciples on the road to Emmaus shortly after his resurrection and they didn't know it was Jesus and he chided them by saying oh foolish ones and slow of heart to believe you were slow to believe or didn't believe at all what Moses and the prophets wrote slow to believe the whole of the word of God you see they only believed the good parts regarding the

Messiah and that was his coming and pomp and glory and splendor and everything which he's going to do but that's the second coming and they completely ignored the first coming and do you know why because the first coming talked about him being a sacrificial lamb the lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world well pray tell me how is a lamb a weak gentle meek lowly lamb how is a lamb like person going to deliver Israel they would say we don't need a lamb we need a lion and that's what he's going to be when he comes a second time but our Jewish friends ignored what the scriptures say about the first coming of the Messiah and they focused only on what the scriptures say about the second coming and you know the second coming of Christ is found far more frequently in the

Old Testament than is the first coming so it's kind of easy to see how they overlooked it because the second coming is so obvious and so frequent and the first coming is kind of couched in language that isn't as specific so he tells them they did not recognize him and though they found no ground verse 28 for putting him to death they asked Pilate that he be executed and when they had carried out that 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 now these people keep in mind these people are in a foreign country as it were they're in Pisidia most of them have probably never heard this before except for some scuttlebutt of strangers and travelers passing through but now they're getting the full scoop and they are sitting there mesmerized by this message because what what Paul is doing is connecting dots in the minds of these people because they had a smattering of truth here and there and here and there but they weren't able to make the connections and put it together and Paul is making the connections for them and it is just absolutely fascinating and he says

God raised him from the dead now here here's where I can see here's where I can see all those people in that synagogue looking at each other with a frown did he did he say raised him from the dead is that what you heard now this I mean how many people do you know who've been raised from the dead this is cataclysmic news these people are trying to absorb and they're trying to assess it and make sense of it and he goes on and says and for many days 40 in fact 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 oh boy we hear these Jews sitting there in these seats in the synagogue and Paul is going at it we preach to you the good news the gospel of the promise made to the fathers and the good news is 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 I have begotten thee and as for the fact that he raised him up from the dead no more to decay he has spoken in this way I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David therefore he also says in another psalm thou wilt not allow thy holy one to undergo decay this is amazing this is psalm 16 it was written a thousand years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem and the psalm says that this holy one who will be the Messiah will have a body that will be put to death but it will not see corruption we all know this is the basis for embalming it's to preserve the life the body of one that has died and that enables the body to be shown at a funeral home and people can say how natural they look and so on and they don't look natural and they don't look good they look dead because that's what death does you know and the undertaker does his magic with the cosmetic stuff and all that and fixes the hair and by the way well I'm not going to have a showing anyway but

[ 35 : 42 ] I was going to say if I did it might be my first experience with the tube but I'm not going to go that way anyway the text goes on to say David verse 36 after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation talking about David now who lived and died a thousand years before Christ fell asleep that's a euphemism in the Bible literally means he died he was laid among his fathers and he underwent decay and what he's saying is David died and was buried and guess what like Job said the worms destroy this body yet in my flesh I will see God so what happened to David's body when it was buried it decayed it broke down that's what that's what animal flesh and we belong to that category as opposed to vegetable we are animal and that's what it does when it dies it deteriorates and breaks down and he is saying we know that's what happened to

David and we know where David's tomb is now I can take you to it and they could back then but David therefore verse 38 therefore let it be known to you brethren that through him through this Jesus this son of David 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 are you kidding me we who know we are not under law but under grace these are not shocking words to us this has become ho-hum stuff to us but if it were possible for you to put yourself in the position of these people it would be a do you hear what he said through this man

Jesus forgiveness of sins is preached and through him we can be justified that means declared righteous from all things from which we could not be declared through the law of Moses are you saying this Jesus guy is greater than Moses in the law yes exactly what he's saying he's saying this Jesus guy is Moses Lord wow these people are trying to process this can this be true you and I have heard this so many times it's just old hat and the tendency is to respond well who doesn't know that well they sure didn't know it this hit them like a bombshell and they are stunned with this information because forgiveness listen no human being has a greater need than forgiveness from the

God who made them I don't care what your situation in life is I don't care what your health is I don't care what your financial record is I don't care where you live or how sumptuously you live your greatest need is forgiveness from God and what this text is saying not only that it comes through Jesus Christ but that's the only way you can get it this is the exclusivity of the gospel this is what paints Christians as narrow and do you know what we are but it's not our doing someone was heard to say the problem I have with you Christians is you you think that nobody else is going to heaven except

Christians and people who believe in Jesus and I said well it's not our idea we didn't think it up we're not saying that that's what God said that's what Jesus said and listen you don't have any right to apologize for that you stick to the guns insisting on what the scriptures say despite the fact that it may not be well received and not be popular it wasn't 2000 years ago either what makes you think people are changed it isn't today but we do not have the right to tone it down we do not have the right to try and take the edge off the gospel if there is a part of it that may be distasteful or unappealing to someone and I've heard people say things like we like to have a big tent inclusivism that's the word inclusivism include everybody well all I can say is that might be a nice thought but it will not stand the test of reality we do not have the right to tone down the gospel in fact

[ 41 : 44 ] Paul made it quite clear that there is an offense to the preaching of the cross why should that offend anybody why should it offend anybody to say the preaching of the cross is the only provision that God has made Christ died on that cross to become our Savior why why would anybody be offended at that think about it when you say that salvation is through Jesus Christ faith and trust in him explicitly and there is no other way you have just knocked the props right out from under anybody and everybody who is planning on going to heaven because they are a nice person as Andy Stanley has pointed out in his little book since nobody is perfect how good is good enough think about that and he concludes with this beautiful thought good people don't go to heaven bad people don't go to heaven forgiven people go to heaven wow that's the whole of it forgiven people forgiven by whom forgiven by God based on what Jesus

Christ did on your behalf to provide it to you as a gift that's the good news that's the gospel and when Paul delivers this broadside and that's what it is you are freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses and now he delivers a warning take heed therefore so that the things spoken of in the prophets may not come upon you in other words there are those who have heard God's way of salvation in the past and you know what they walked away from it they rejected it did not appeal to them because you see if you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and salvation from your sins you don't have any bragging rights you've got nothing to boast about you can't strut around heaven and say well I'm here because I gave this much money to the church and I'm here because I served so many Sundays and I'm here because I went to Sunday school 38 years and didn't miss a



Sunday and I'm here because I mowed the next door neighbor's grass and I'm here because no no no none of that stuff none of that stuff we'll only be able to say I'm here because of him and there will only be one him and that's Jesus so for by grace are you saved through faith that not of yourselves it's a gift of God not of works lest anyone should boast well it'd be wonderful and there'd be no braggarts in heaven and as Paul and Barnabas were going out the people kept begging listen can't get enough of this stuff did you hear what he said can that be true it sounds too good to be true you know what we need to get this guy back we need to hear some more of this the jury's still out and they start debating about this among themselves and this is a wonderful thing you know if you can get people talking stirred up enough and interested enough to talk about the gospel even if they don't believe it that's okay listen if the gospel is true if Jesus

Christ is the Savior and the only Savior if he was sent from God to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves if all of that is true you better believe that it can and it will stand the greatest test of scrutiny that you can give it and there is nothing to fear because the truth cannot be disproved and if it isn't true we're better off knowing about it like the question that was asked by Bill Fay if what you believe now is not true would you want to know it you better believe I want to know it absolutely listen you only come by this way once truth is too important truth is too vital truth is that which is consistent with the character and nature of

God you cannot afford to be without it now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up many of the Jews and of the God fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas who speaking to them were urging them to continue in the grace of God and the next Sabbath one week later nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of God wow word got around they were telling and not only that but listen this is what this guy said and people are saying really he said that I'm telling you I was there I heard it with my own ear isn't that right Bill now what he said yeah that's what he said and they're all talking about all over town and boy I'm telling you the pub it was like a public relations firm got cranked up and the next

[ 47 : 41 ] Sunday everybody shows up and they will not be disappointed and the thing that I want to point out is in closing with one more verse and it is from Acts chapter if it didn't move chapter 21 yeah chapter 21 this is this is amazing this is absolutely amazing talk about the transition this is important I want you to get this Acts 21 Paul is sailing from Miletus now in Acts 13 where we were just a while ago that was approximately 15 years after his conversion when that took place that which I just shared with you 15 years after his conversion now in Acts 21 Paul is going to Jerusalem for the last time here he's going to be arrested and sent to Rome to stand trial and

Acts chapter 21 is about five years after what we just shared with you from Acts 13 that's where this chronology thing really becomes important you see what's taking place here this is what we are reading in in Acts 21 is approximately 20 years after the resurrection and the crucifixion what happened at the crucifixion a number of things remember one of them the veil and the temple was split remember that that is so critical and what was that suggesting what was that symbolizing it was symbolizing Judaism as a religion that is acceptable to God is over it's done with God's finished with it the holy of holies the ark of the covenant that was behind that curtain

God ripped the curtain in two from the top to the bottom and he is saying I'm done with that and do you know when he did that he did that when Jesus was on the cross and cried out it is finished it is finished what was finished the great work of redemption was accomplished Christ who knew no sin had been made sin for us there on that cross and God poured out his wrath on his son who bore our sins and you don't have to suffer the wrath of God because Jesus suffered it for you in your place that's the gospel and that's why it's such a hard sell people just can't believe that's too good to be true but it is true that is the gospel and when that veil in the temple was rent in two and the ark of the covenant that could be visited by the high priest once a year not without blood on the day of atonement

Yom Kippur that's all over with that's all over and done and what has taken the place what has taken the place of the law and the ark and the items of furniture and what has taken the place of the animal sacrifices that's all capuch that's all passe that's all over with Christ became the final ultimate sacrifice for sin not with the blood of bulls and goats but with his own blood he entered the holy place having secured eternal redemption for us wow that that is the centerpiece of the universe right there that's everything God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself blockbuster stuff blockbuster stuff now if that's true and if as Paul says in Romans 6 we are not under law but under grace what do you make of this

I'm talking about Acts chapter 21 and verse 15 they are on their way to Jerusalem and in verse 17 when we had come to Jerusalem the brethren received us gladly and now the following day Paul went in with us to James and all the elders were present and after he had greeted them he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry and when they heard it they began glorifying God praising God it was just wonderful news they couldn't get over and I want you to look at the next phrase oh my goodness and I want you to remember this is 20 years after the resurrection that this event we are now going to read took place verse 20 when they heard it they began glorifying God and they said to him you see brother how many thousands there are among the Jews who have believed what's he saying believe what they have believed Yeshua how Mashiach they have believed that

[ 53 : 40 ] Jesus was the Messiah they've accepted him as their Messiah well that's great news that's wonderful news but read the rest of the verse and they are all zealous that means eager that means sold out to the law well what business had they being sold out to the law the law is passe we're not under law we're under grace Moses time has come and gone and it went with the rending of the veil in the temple that was it Judaism is kaput Judaism to this day and I do not intend I do not want to be disrespectful or unkind to my Jewish friends but the truth is the truth Judaism is a defunct religion and by that I mean Jews that observe the feast days Jews that observe everything the Sabbath the circumcision the whole nine yards they are doing that out of tradition and out of commitment on their part but it is not necessary to do it in order to gain favor with

God it once was but it is no longer so if a Jew wants to keep the Sabbath he can if he wants to tithe he can if he wants to have his son circumcised he can that's all well and good there's nothing wrong or evil about it it's just that God does not require it and there was a time when he did and now here's the transition I want to leave you with this so you've got something to think about between now and next week if that's the case when Paul continues to preach this gospel he's going to run into more and more conflict and the reason he is is because now the Gentiles are coming into the picture these are not Jews but Gentiles they are believing on Christ and there is an entire chapter in Acts 15 that is devoted to the issue well don't these Gentiles have to be circumcised in order to be acceptable to God they this is all well and good that they believed in Jesus as their Messiah but they don't they have to be circumcised and certain brethren came down from

Jerusalem and said except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses there's no way you can be saved and they had a big flap big get-together big conference I'm sure there was a lot of anger and a lot of arguing back and forth and they came to the conclusion no Gentiles really don't have to be circumcised and not only that but Gentiles don't have to keep the Sabbath and they don't have to have a kosher diet you don't have to become a Jew because you become a believer in a Jewish Messiah now follow me closely because here's where we're going then the Jews are saying well now wait a minute wait a minute if the Gentiles can be fully accepted by God and don't have to do all of those things why do we have to do them why do we Jews have to continue in this if it's good enough for the

Gentiles why do we have and the whole point is they didn't they didn't and that's why they are going to charge Paul with kill him kill him because he is teaching against the law of Moses that's the conflict that eventually is what's going to get him killed so we'll pick this up next week I'm sorry I don't have time for Q&A; but if we had Q&A; I wouldn't be able to hear your questions anyway because I'm deaf in this year because I lost my hearing aid and I've got the ear plug that the ear plug that belongs on the hearing aid and this ear plugging this ear so I can't hear anything with this ear and my vision is okay though where did you go well listen if you think I get excited about this stuff you haven't seen anything yet what's to come is just would you stand with me please our father we recognize fully that there is much about what we have said that we'd certainly like to understand even better than we do but the scriptures make it so clear of this tremendous tension that was produced with the introduction of the gospel of the grace of God and the tension has not lessened it's been maintained many still look upon this information as too good to be true but how grateful we are that it is true God who cannot lie has made this wonderful wonderful provision for us and Jesus was willing to pay the penalty we just don't understand that kind of love but we're so grateful for it and our prayer today is that every one of these precious people here knows the joy and the peace that comes from a full freely forgiven status that only you can provide and we're so thankful for it that Jesus died to make it available dear friend if you are here today and you've never put your faith and trust in Christ would you give this your very earnest consideration and if you want to know what is at stake the answer is everything everything your eternal destiny is at stake thank you father for the kind attention these folks have given us help us to leave this place with an air of expectancy and gratitude for what you've been pleased to reveal in Christ's name we pray amen amen amen