

The Jewish Final Solution to the World's Problem - The Transition Truth Within the New Testament, Acts Part 2

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[0 : 00] continue to examine what we consider to be an extremely critical concept that is essential to understanding the plan and program of God. And that is the movement that took place within the body of the New Testament from things Jewish until things...

Well, poor thing's probably hungry.

It could be an electrifying sermon here. Oh, well, he's just doing what God made him to do. It reminds me of old Dr. Walter Wilson, a beloved physician, pastor, practiced medicine for 50 years, and I don't know how many thousands of babies he delivered, but he was teaching one time, and there was a little youngster about a year and a half old in the front row sitting on his mother's lap, and it was just squirming and squirming like youngsters that age do.

And she tried to pat him, you know, to get him to sit still and whisper to him, straighten up, sit still. After a while, Dr. Wilson stopped, and he looked down there, and he says, Ma'am, he said, God told that little baby to wiggle, and you're telling him to sit still.

Now, who do you think he's going to listen to? So nature has its way, doesn't it? We are considering a concept in the plan and program of God that I have embarrassingly mentioned a few times as having completely escaped me for the first 15 years of my Christian life.

[2 : 06] Not only did I not see or understand the concept, I had no idea as to the importance of it. And after I heard somewhat about it the first few times, my response was, well, so what's the big deal anyway?

You know, the important thing is you believe on Jesus, and you're going to heaven, and your sins are forgiven, and the rest of this stuff is kind of peripheral, and this doesn't matter that much, but God just called him home.

So anyway, this is really, really important content.

Because, in my estimation, an ignorance of it, or a denial of it, prevents the church, which is the body of Christ, from being what it ought to be, and functioning as it ought to function, and prevents it from having the impact that it ought to have in a community.

And, in my estimation, those are pretty important things. So, while there may be a tendency for some, particularly some who are not all that excited or interested in the Bible or Bible study, who just might kind of shrug their shoulders and say, well, you know, it's no big deal, and where are we going for lunch today?

[3 : 46] And stuff like that, you know, is important to them. But anything that I can do to impress upon you the importance of this concept, I'm prepared to do.

And I really want you to have a handle on this and understand it, because I don't know, of course, none of us know, I have no idea how long God is going to enable me, physically and mentally, to continue on here as your pastor.

But I trust it will be until one of those aspects fails me, or you just tell me my services are no longer needed.

But, in the meanwhile, I want to instill these concepts in you in such a way so that when the good Lord takes me out of here through whatever means he chooses, this church will not slip into becoming just another church, because this message is too dear and too precious and too important to lose.

And we want to make certain that it is maintained here and passed on here after myself and our present board of elders are already gone.

[5 : 06] We want this to remain forever a grace church, a church that emphasizes the grace of God and the distinctive message that was communicated in an extraordinary way that updated the revelation of God in such a way that it changed everything.

And yet, the sad truth of it is, and I know this to be a fact, this is not opinion. The sad truth of it is, the church, which is the body of Christ, is contending in a spiritual warfare with weapons that are out of date and outmoded and have been laid aside and should no longer be in use.

But these are the things that they are trying to fight the good fight of faith with. And it's a losing proposition. We have got to be alert and aware of what God's latest revelation and marching orders are to us so that we can activate them.

And yet, when you present these concepts to people, and I wouldn't be surprised if some in this audience don't feel this way as well, because it's the way I felt when I first heard these things.

You know, you just think, well, this preacher's got a particular quirk. I guess this is his hobby horse or whatever. So anyway, I want to do what I can to show you the importance of it, and I want this to get locked into your spirit, not simply so you will remember it, but so you won't be able to forget it, because it's that important.

[6 : 56] And it relates to the gospel of the grace of God as communicated and updated to the Apostle Paul, who saw the risen Christ and received his commission directly from him, a commission that was entirely different than what the twelve apostles received from Christ when he was here on earth and began his ministry at the outset.

These are two different things. Those twelve who are enumerated in Matthew 10, when Jesus started his earthly ministry, were commissioned to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

It was the same message that John the baptizer had already been preaching. And Jesus and the twelve continued on with that same theme, and it was a message that was delivered exclusively to the Jewish people, not to Gentiles, not to Egyptians, not to Romans, not to Babylonians, but specifically to Israel, because Israel was the nation that was the recipient of the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And they were, for practical purposes, the first Jews, if you will, the first Hebrews. And out of them came, of course, the twelve tribes and the whole nation of Israel.

There was a specific message that was being communicated to them, and it was called the good news of the kingdom of heaven. This is something that the Jews had longed for and looked for from Genesis 3 on.

[8 : 41] They had waited 4,000 years for this promise to be fulfilled. God told our original mother, Eve, that her seed would be that which would provide redemption for the sin that they had committed to which the entire human race would now be a part of, simply through genetics.

because when Adam and Eve fell, and we still don't know exactly what that means, we know there was a moral, spiritual catastrophe that took place.

And it all centered around their disobedience of a simple command that God had given them. You see, God had given them volition, the power to exercise their will.

God did not make them automatons or robots so that they had to please Him. God made them with a volition so that they could please Him or they could also please themselves.

And they chose to please themselves. They disobeyed God. The temptation, of course, Satan figures into the whole mix as well, but they were responsible.

[10 : 07] And when they did this, when they took upon them this act of disobedience, something we don't understand happened to Adam and Eve on the inside of them.

I don't have any reason to believe that they looked any different outwardly, but something happened in their psyche, in their makeup, and they became spiritually estranged from God.

Separated from God. They took unto themselves something that God did not put in them when He created them. And we call that a sinful nature, a predisposition to be self-satisfying, self-serving, and self-pleasing.

This is the human dilemma today, always has been. Always has been. The chief consequence of the fall is an ingrained selfishness.

Every one of you tends to be self-centered. Me too. We're all self-centered rather than God-centered.

[11 : 22] And the proof of that is the fact that most of us, most of the time, would rather have and want what we want rather than what God wants. We want to serve.

We know what we want. And we're willing sometimes to go to great lengths and extremes for it. That's our fallenness. And the entire world, all population of all places, all languages, all races, all colors, all cultures, is infected with this thing called the sinful nature.

and the wages of sin is death. Spiritual death, which they experienced immediately. And by the way, the fact that Adam and Eve was hiding from God, why were they hiding?

They were hiding because they were afraid. Well, why were they afraid? They were afraid because they were guilty. Well, why were they guilty? Because they had disobeyed God and they knew it.

And they had a conscience. That too was programmed in them. And this conscience was pricked. When your conscience is pricked, it means that you are in mental pain because you know you have violated a standard.

[12 : 40] And guilt is the result. And they hid because of that. And when God sought them out, they came up with this thing, you know, well, the fig leaves and we hid because we were naked.

We didn't want you to see us naked. Isn't that something? Here's the maker and creator and as if they had something to hide from God. And God said, well, yeah, you were naked.

That's the way I made you. Never bothered you before. Why does it bother you now? And of course, it did. And I suspect this is just a Weisman opinion, but I suspect that it's got something to do with the fact that when you cover your nakedness, you cover your private parts.

Well, what's the significance of that? Significance of that is that's the way you reproduce. That's the way you bring the next generation into the world is via your private parts, men and women.

And here, by the way, nobody much worries about having their elbows exposed, do they? Or their ears. But there's a certain amount of shame that is connected with not covering your body.

- [14 : 01] And we tend not to have that shame when we're born and that's why a little baby, you know, a year, two years old, is not embarrassed when mommy gives him his bath.
- But when that little tyke starts getting older, you know what? He starts developing a sense of privacy and he doesn't want mommy to give him a bath anymore. He wants to do it himself.
- And there is a sense of shame that is connected with that. And I am satisfied that it's got something to do with this is the way the next sinful generation is perpetuated through sexual activity.
- Now, this does not mean in any way, shape, or form that sex is somehow something that's bad or evil or displeases God. Quite the contrary. Someone has said that sex is God's idea.
- He thought it up and it is a good thing and it is a holy thing and it is a righteous thing. But like everything else God gave us, he never gave us anything that we're not capable of corrupting.
- [15 : 10] And we're corrupting sex today, big time, in every way you can imagine, even with this scatterbrained nonsense of same-sex marriage.
- That's just the corruption of something that God has provided. So all of this has just brought the whole world crashing down. You do realize something's wrong with the world, don't you?
- Do you think that this is the way things are supposed to be? Is there anybody that feels that way? I mean, can we not look upon society and say, what in the world is wrong with the world?
- Well, this is what's wrong with the world. This is what we're saying. It's a self-centeredness that is pervasive. And when you take two people, and this one really wants his way, and this person B really wants his way, and they get in each other's way, you have a power struggle.
- And there is a contest as to who is going to get their way. That's what politics is all about. It's all about power and control. Who's going to call the shots?
- [16 : 27] Who's going to get their own way? This is what marriage is about when it is reduced to a non-biblical kind of marriage, such as you have an ongoing power struggle in a marriage, tit for tat, and back and forth, and who's going to get their way?
- This is all part of our fallenness, you see. And this is something that God promised that he would address. And he would address this through a redeemer.
- And the redeemer would be the seed of the woman. So God is going to use an offspring of humanity to remedy the problem of humanity.
- And that offspring, of course, is going to be the God man. It's going to be Jesus Christ who will be born of a woman, yet not with a sinful nature.
- Because the seed implanted in the Virgin Mary comes directly from God who provided Jesus with his deity and Mary provided Jesus with his humanity.
- [17 : 32] And we have a perfect blending of two entities in one body, a God man, a theanthropic person, so that Jesus Christ is the only one who ever lived who was like he is.
- He is utterly unique. And this coming of this Messiah, this redeemer, is something that the Jewish people had been promised and looked for because he was to come through the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- The Jews knew that. They anticipated that. They were excited about it. And every generation that came along, they were hoping that their generation would be the one.

And particularly, if you were of the tribe of Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, if you were of the tribe of Judah, you knew that when that Messiah comes, he's going to be a direct descendant of Judah, the fourth born son.

Wow. Hmm. Jesus is referred to as the lion of the tribe of Judah. So, the centuries rolled around and still no Messiah.

[18 : 50] generations came and died, no Messiah. And one day, after waiting four thousand years for God to make good on that, four thousand years, a guy came on the scene that was dressed in funny clothing and he had a funny diet and he had a message to deliver that they had never heard before and the message was, repent, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Right around the corner. What? Wow. Is this guy serious? Is God really going to make good after all these years on this promise that he made?

Who is this one? God and a little later, John, this same one, who was the second cousin of Jesus, is going to electrify his audience.

All these people are coming around and they're being baptized of John and John was preaching a get ready message, Israel. This is it. This is crunch time.

God is going to make good on his promise. You better get ready to receive the Messiah because he's right around the corner and when he comes, he's going to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.

[20 : 19] Do you know how long we've been praying for that? Do you know how long we've been praying thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven? He prayed that for centuries.

And now John is saying, it's coming. This is it. Get ready people. And one day then he looked up and he saw Jesus coming down the road and he said to the people, behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

And it was Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter's son. Wow. People were absolutely electrified. I'm sure some said things like, well, if you're the one that should come, if you're God's fix-it man because the Redeemer is going to redeem things, he's going to fix stuff that's broken.

He's going to fix people. And he's going to fix institutions. And he's going to right wrongs. And he's going to bring justice where there is injustice.

He is going to be God's superman. And you, Jesus of Nazareth, if that's who you are, show us something.

[21 : 37] So, he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, caused the lame to walk, raised the dead, stilled the storms, cast out demons.

What else do you want? He had all the credentials. He did everything that could possibly be expected of a Messiah. So, when he presented himself to Israel as their king and as their redeemer, attested to, backed up by all of those miracles, angels, what was their response?

Well, the response of some, unfortunately, these were the people who didn't really count. These were Peter and James and John.

And who are these guys? They're a bunch of fishermen. They don't amount to anything. They're not shakers and movers. Nobody's paying any attention to what they say. They're fishermen.

And what's worse, one of them is even a tax collector. Can you believe that? And those are the kind of people that Jesus surrounded himself with. And what about the people whose opinion did matter?

[22 : 53] They weren't interested. As far as they were concerned, Jesus of Nazareth was a relative nobody. And so was John the baptizer, the one who came to announce him.

These guys didn't have any official credentials. You know what you would call them? You would call them commoners. Commoners. They're not people to be reckoned with. They're a bunch of riffraff.

So while the common people heard Jesus gladly, the religious establishment, the go-to guys, the up-and-outers, the shakers and movers, they said, we don't want anything to do with this guy.

one of the quotes from the Old Testament is, the stone, the stone that the builders rejected, the same has become the chief cornerstone.

And the analogy that is being used there is like in the building of a structure or a temple, and all of the stones were to be cut off site.

[23 : 57] They were to be cut at the quarry, not where they were to be inserted in the building because no tool was to come upon them there. That was sacred. So they had to be cut precisely to measurement at the quarry and then brought to the site and placed in the building.

And if one of the stones that had been ordered with the dimensions and everything didn't fit or wasn't right or wasn't where it was supposed to be in the configuration of the building, the building superintendent would reject the stone, send it back, consider it unqualified.

That's the meaning that is given to that phrase, the stone that the builders rejected, the same has become the chief cornerstone. And who was that stone? Yeah, it wasn't an it.

The stone was a he. The stone was Christ who became the cornerstone. The builders rejected him because he didn't fit their qualifications for what they thought a Messiah should be and do.

So they rejected him and they said, crucify him, crucify him. And they did. And as a result, we have a resurrection.

[25 : 16] When Jesus died on that cross, he paid the penalty for the sins of the entire world. He was able to do that because of who he was.

You and I couldn't do that. No matter how much we may want to, no matter how sacrificial we may think we could be, we couldn't do that because we have our own sin to contend with. See, that's why it took a sinless one to die for the sins of others.

And that's why Jesus was qualified. He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us. God so loved the world that he gave.

Are you connecting any dots? Is any of this coming together for you? Sometimes it takes a while and often it takes some repeated hearings and sometimes we connect a couple of dots today and we may have to wait a couple of weeks for a couple of more dots to get connected but eventually the thing starts coming together and when it does, aha, so that's it, a light comes on and the old southern spiritual takes on new meaning.

Praise the Lord, I saw the light. And that's what it means, it's a spiritual light. So when John the Baptist came with this electrifying message, people thronged out to hear him by the hundreds, by the thousands, and they were coming along, lining up alongside the banks of the river Jordan, and John was baptizing them for repentance and the remission of sins, and it was everybody get ready, the Messiah is coming, God is about to do his thing, and after all these years we've waited, this is going to be absolutely amazing.

[27 : 04] And then they rejected him. Wow. they rejected him, and crucified him, and God raised him from the dead.

And now what I want to inject in this portion of the story is something that is very, very important. Here it is. It is generally assumed, probably by most of Christendom, that with the crucifixion of Christ, God withdrew his favor and his promise to the nation of Israel, because after all, they were complicit in the execution and the death of the very one that God gave to be their redeemer.

Yet, without that death, there could be no redemption. And yet, they weren't able to connect those dots. They didn't put all of that together. They were very erroneous in their thinking. And I'm sure that some of the Jews, particularly those of the religious establishment, standing there in their fine robes and all of their self-righteousness, looking on that cross and Jesus hanging there on that cross with the crown of thorns, some of them no doubt said to themselves, aha, you see, I told you he wasn't the Messiah.

I told you he wasn't the one that God sent. And this is proof positive. You think God would send his son into the world and allow the Romans to crucify him? That God would do that?

Well, of course not. That's crazy. They didn't connect those dots either. They didn't understand that it was through that death on the cross that God's righteousness was being satisfied and that would enable God to lift the curse imposed upon man for his sin.

[28 : 55] because we're all born with this. We're all infected with this terminal disease called sin. And they didn't connect that dot. And it is generally assumed by Christendom as a whole that with the crucifixion of Christ, God wrote Israel off.

That's it. I'm finished with Israel. They rejected my son. I don't want anything to do with him. I'm going to start something entirely new. I'm going to call the new people into order and I'm going to call them the church, which is the body of Christ.

And I'm going to have it come into being on the day of Pentecost. None of that's true. None of that's true. But that's what's commonly believed.

What we need to understand is that with the crucifixion of Christ, now, for the first time, Peter, chiefest of the apostles, has a message to preach that is different from what John the Baptist preached.

John the Baptist preached, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost. The kingdom of heaven is vested in Christ.

[30 : 10] You crucified him. God raised him from the dead. And you know what? If you will now, after the fact, after you have killed him, if you will now embrace him because of his resurrection, God will send him back again.

And God will fulfill that promise of the kingdom. And that's the message that he delivered in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost. You will note that all of the recipients in that audience were all Jews.

They had to be Jews because this was a Jewish feast. Christ. And Gentiles were not allowed. You couldn't go there if you wanted to, if you weren't a Jew. This was a Jewish thing.

God was still making good on his promise and then Peter repeated the message in chapter 3. And more people believed and the number came to be about 5,000.

But you know what? 5,000 is just a pittance. It's just a minuscule number compared to the number who were available to the message. So what I am telling you is that this thing regarding the kingdom kept being extended as an offer to the nation of Israel after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

[31 : 30] During the ministry of the twelve apostles because Christ empowered them to perform miracles just like he had. And as you read the early chapters of the book of Acts, it becomes quite clear that the apostles are involved in all kinds of miracles.

including the speaking in tongues, the healing of the man at the gate, gate beautiful in chapter 3, Ananias and Sapphira and their untimely demise in chapter 5.

And we find one miracle after another because the age of miracles and the age of Israel was still intact and the promise was still available. and the time would come when it would be withdrawn and then God would do something with the church and he's going to call up a new apostle with a new mission, a new objective that will be entirely different and separate from that of Israel.

And his name is Saul of Tarsus. If God had looked over the planet to find the one who would be least likely to go proclaiming this message of Jesus of Nazareth, Saul of Tarsus would have been his man because this was the guy who was committed to stamping out these people called believers in Jesus as the Messiah.

And he even went out of his way, pursued them all the way into a foreign country, went clear up to Damascus, probably 120 miles to the north, just so he could round up the Christians who had escaped from Jerusalem and fled up to Syria, which by the way is a very hot spot in our world right now, fled up to Syria and he went up for the express purpose of bringing them back to stand trial and bringing them back to Jerusalem in chains.

[33 : 21] Instead, he was confronted by the living Christ on the road to Damascus and gloriously saved. And a whole new thing is going to begin because this man is the one who is designated by God himself as the apostle to the Gentiles.

They never had an apostle. Israel had 12 of them. Gentiles never had one. This man came on the scene with no credentials insofar as being a follower of Jesus.

Someone asked a question at our men's class Thursday. Why Paul for this special mission? Why not one of the twelve? Well, Paul wasn't qualified to be one of the twelve because when they replaced Judas who had committed suicide, when they replaced Judas with Matthias in chapter 2 of the book of Acts or chapter 1, they gave the qualifications for being an apostle, a follower of Christ.

And one of the qualifications was he had to have been with Jesus going in and out from the time he began his ministry up until then. And we have no record that Paul or Saul of Tarsus even knew Jesus before that time.

And not only that, but he also had to be one who had witnessed the resurrection of Christ. Christ. And? Saul of Tarsus had not witnessed the resurrection of Christ in bodily form as the twelve had during his forty days and forty nights on the earth after his resurrection.

[35 : 04] He did see the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus, but that was different. So he wasn't qualified to be one of the twelve, but he was qualified to be an altogether new apostle.

Now, for just a little bit of time we have left, I want you to turn to Acts chapter eight. I want to show you a verse that is so often overlooked and it is so important.

Acts chapter eight. It is amazing how many times I read a verse like this before I came to these truths and it just didn't register.

Just didn't register. Acts eight one says, And Saul, who is going to become Paul, the apostle, Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death.

This is the stoning of Stephen. And on that day, look carefully at this text. On that day, a great persecution arose against the church or the assembly or the gathering, which is the way it ought to read.

[36 : 13] The word is ekklesia and it simply means it called out assembly. A great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem. And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

And look at the next three words. Except. The apostles. Well, how else are we to read that other than the apostles weren't scattered?

They stayed in Jerusalem. Why did these people scatter? Well, simply because they fled for their life. This was persecution. They were rounding these people up.

I've often thought of these people as being the first Gestapo. We tend to think of Adolf Hitler's henchmen being the first Gestapo. But the first Gestapo, ironically enough, in the Bible, is a bunch of Jews.

And they're out to round up other Jews, their own countrymen, who had become believers in Jesus as the Messiah. And they're going to stamp out this sect.

[37 : 21] They're going to put an end to this. Because they saw these believing Jews as a cancer growing on Judaism. And they were going to stamp them out.

So they are fleeing for their life. But the apostles stay in Jerusalem. Well, now, if things were so hot in Jerusalem, why did the apostles stay there?

Well, everybody else was leaving for fear of their life. The apostles were staying out of obedience to God. And these were people who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

And as a result, their actions were in concert with God's will and God's plan. They were still in Jerusalem. He said, you were to be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

They're still working on Jerusalem. That's where the headquarters is. That's where the temple is. That's where the priesthood is. That's where all the shakers and movers are. And many of the priests will become obedient to the faith.

[38 : 29] But many, of course, will not. This is where they are. Now, while we're here, I want you to really focus on that phrase, accept the apostles.

And in verse 4, therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria. All right.

Now, remember, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria. Now, Philip is going to Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. And what they are doing is backed up with what?

Authenticating miracles and signs. Multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing.

All those miracles did, they served to buttress and validate and vindicate the message that the apostles were preaching. What these people saw and heard convinced them these guys are for real.

[39 : 33] And God is really behind this. And there's no way they could be doing these things if that were not the case. So what we've got here is an intensification of the plan and program of God regarding the kingdom continuing on and being extended in its offer to Israel while they continue in a rejection mode.

This is going to go on for years. I'm just going to hit you now with a number that I think is really significant. If you keep it in mind and maybe check it out in the scripture references a little later.

When you go from Acts chapter eight, the persecution and the scattering. to Acts chapter 11, 10 and 11, and the incident regarding Cornelius and Peter going to Cornelius, you would never guess it.

But between chapter eight and chapter 10, there's an expanse of 10 to 12 years that have lapsed.

What does this mean? What it means is this. When Peter goes to Cornelius, a Roman army officer, a Gentile, and gives him the gospel, which he was reluctant to do, Jesus had been crucified and raised from the dead a full 10 to 12 years earlier.

[41 : 11] And there are still all about the Jew. Now think of that. You mean this is all about the Jew?

Yeah. All these years after some suppose that it's the Christian church. No, no, no, no, no. Never has been the Christian church.

That doesn't come on the scene until later. This is still about Israel. And when you look at the chronology of the book of Acts, we pointed out to you that it involves three decades from Acts one to Acts 28.

There's approximately 30 years of history that transpired. A full one third of those years, 10 of those years is sandwiched between Acts 8 and Acts 10.

A third of the whole history is gobbled up in those two chapters. That is really significant. And I never saw this years ago, but I see it now. And all this is saying is, what is generally thought of as having been the origins of the Christian church is really nothing more than a continuation of God's dealing with Israel as a nation and the people with the apostles.

[42 : 37] And the whole thing is as Jewish as it can possibly be. Gentiles don't come into the picture at all. While we're still here, if you're still there, that Acts 8 passage, I just want to point this out to you.

Here it is, accept the apostles. And then when you come to, let me see here, I've got some many references. Okay.

Chapter 11. The portion that we were talking about, you've got to have this first. You absolutely have to have this. So, give me five minutes. Acts 11 and verse 18.

And this is adding the 10 to 12 years on to this. And Peter is explaining to his Jewish brethren who called him on the carpet for going to Cornelius because he's a Gentile.

And we read that in verse 18. And when they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God saying, well, then God has granted to the Gentiles. That's news.

[44 : 08] Also, the repentance that leads to life. Can you believe that? The Gentiles? That can't be. And now look, keep reading. So then, those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen.

Where was that? That was back in chapter 8. We were just there. They made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch. Now look at this. Look, look, look. Speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.

Wow. What is that? Where are the Gentiles? They're non-existent. Oh, they're there, but they're not receiving the message.

This is a Jewish message exclusively. Except to Jews alone. But, oh, oh, now watch.

But, contrast. There were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also.

[45 : 22] What a breakthrough. These are not Greek-speaking Jews. These are Greeks that are Greeks. These are Gentiles. Different from those in chapter 6 and verse 1, Hellenized.

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch, because they had heard that this message had been preached to Gentiles, and Gentiles in great numbers were believing.

And when word got back to Jerusalem, they said, wait a minute, how can that be? The God of Israel is a Jewish God. How can that be? There isn't anything for the Gentiles here.

Barnabas, you and another need to go up to Antioch and find out what's going on. This is not kosher.

Something's wrong here. Well, the truth of the matter was, Gentiles were coming on board by droves.

[46 : 30] And as the influence and the unbelief of the Jews is intensifying, inroads and belief on the part of the Gentiles is beginning.

And it is going to be very, very dramatic. And God is going to raise up this fan to be the chief administrator of the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles.

Saul of Tarsus, Paul the Apostle. Amazing. And hey, you haven't heard anything yet. Would you stand with me, please? I really dislike the need to interrupt this message by a different message next week.

But this is something I have to do. It's not something I particularly want to do. Something I have to do in a special message next week. But two weeks from now, the Lord willing, we will resume where we are now and take that up.

And it is absolutely glorious and stunning to see what God does. Just amazing. Father, we are so thankful for what you've been pleased to reveal.

[47 : 42] And we are embarrassed that we have for so long overlooked it and never really made the connection. But we know better now. And we are responsible for communicating it to others, who in turn will be responsible for communicating it to others.

Most of all, we thank you for the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, who came not merely for the Jew or the Gentile, but for the whole world.

Because that's the way you love this erring, straying world. And you want to call it back to yourself through this glorious gospel message.

Thank you for the privilege of proclaiming it. Thank you for the fact that anyone here, even at this moment, can say, Lord Jesus, these things are true.

I believe them to be because your word reveals them. And even though I have a lot of questions, I know one thing. I have a need. And I believe you can meet it.

[48 : 44] And I want to put my trust and faith in you. I want you to be my savior. I want to give myself to you. And I want you to take this life of mine and do with it, whatever you will.

I'm willing. Thank you for dying for my sin. If you've made that your prayer, share it with someone else or see me after the service. Thank you, Father, for the presence of each one here and for the truth that you've made available to us.

Help us to be responsible in its use of it. In Christ's name. Amen.