

God's Turn from Israel to the Gentiles

Tags: The Turning of the Age from the Law to ... God's pure grace
This is an excerpt from the 6-Part Study Series by the same name.

There are four key points to be drawn from the 'Jerusalem Council Meeting' of Acts 15.

1. Paul was right and most of the Messianic Jewish leaders in Jerusalem who opposed Paul were wrong, but not Peter. Peter recognized God was using Paul in this new and different way with his new "Gospel of the grace of God" for the Gentiles. Peter had had his own experience to guide him. Peter originally had resisted the Lord's instruction for him to go to the house of the Gentile Cornelius. The result of Peter's visit was that saw how that Cornelius and his Gentile house had been 'saved' and that they received the Holy Spirit just as the Jews had at Pentecost, and these Gentiles Had NOT Been Circumcised or Brought Under the Mosaic Law. In the Council Meeting' of Acts 15 By Peter recounted his story. This demonstrates how that God in His foreknowledge had foreseen Paul's future conflict with the Messianic church and used Peter's experience that would serve to rally him to Paul's defense years later in the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council meeting.

2. AFTER the 'Jerusalem Council Meeting' of Acts 15 any unbelieving (heathen) Jews would be seen as unbelieving (heathen) Gentiles and now have to believe and be 'saved as unbelieving (heathen) Gentiles.'

For 2,000 years under "the Law," Gentiles had to be saved as Jews under "the Law." It was by "the Law" and 'circumcision' that God had separated Israel from among the nations declaring the Nation Israel as 'special unto the Lord' (Exo. 19:5-6; Deut. 32:8). At that time, if a Gentile wished to be blessed of God, they had to be blessed through Israel's 'kingdom and Law program.' No other way existed. God had established this arrangement initially with the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3). With the Acts 15 meeting James, Cephas [Peter], and John's declaration, as seen in Galatians 2:9 (KJV only), formally ENDED this requirement for Gentiles. Paul wrote of this new arrangement;

"(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision [Israel], the same was mighty in me [Paul] toward the

Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me [Paul], they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that We Should Go Unto The Heathen [Unbelieving Jews And Gentiles], and they [Peter and company] unto the circumcision [the believing Israelites]. (Galatians 2:8-9 (KJV)

From Act 15 onward, any unsaved Jews had to Be Saved as lost Gentiles, that is “by grace through faith” in Jesus Christ... this now was the only God-sanctioned way of salvation. That is to say, Jews from then on would have to be saved through Paul’s “gospel of the grace of God,” no longer could men be saved under Israel’s “gospel of the kingdom.” The significance of this was and is staggering. It also explains Paul’s strong words to the Galatians (Gal. 1:6-9, below) which he could not have written prior to the Acts 15 Council of Jerusalem. To the Galatians Paul wrote;

“... there be some that trouble you [Gentiles], and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we [Paul and company] have preached unto you, let him be accursed [banned]. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach ANY OTHER GOSPEL [including the ‘kingdom gospel’] unto you than that ye have received [from Paul], let him Be ACCURSED [banned].” (Galatians 1:6-9 (KJV)

So, from the time of Acts 15 forward ONLY Paul’s ‘gospel of pure grace’ was valid. The turn had occurred from Israel to the Gentiles including “all men,” both Jews and Gentiles. The gospel began with John the Baptist, which then was enhanced and preached of Jesus and then Peter at Pentecost, continued with the Jews at Jerusalem.

Then ONLY Paul’s gospel that “Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead” (1Cor. 15:1-4) was valid for BOTH unsaved Jews and unsaved Gentiles... to believe and be saved. Paul in Gal 1:6-9 says “Any Other gospel” than the one Paul preached was now ‘banned.’

The only ‘salvation plan’ available was to “ALL Men” and to be acquired ... “by grace through faith in ‘Christ ALONE,’ Only Paul’s “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24) was to be preached. This decision was formally established at the Acts 15 Council Meeting at Jerusalem concerning both Jews and Gentiles as recounted and seen in Gal. 2:9 (KJV only).

3. It is clear that from the outcome of the account of the Acts 15 Council Meeting, as seen in Gal. 2:8-9, that Peter used “the keys of the kingdom” that Jesus had given him in Matt 19:19. Jesus gave Peter “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” for Israel, not the keys to heaven. Israel is to inherit and co-reign with Christ “the earth” (Rev 5:10, 20:6).

“And I [Jesus] will give unto thee [Peter] the Keys of The Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou Shalt BIND On Earth shall be bound in heaven: and Whatsoever Thou Shalt LOOSE On Earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19 (KJV).

As result of the decision of the Acts 15 Council Meeting, more importantly... Peter used those keys to bind or limit his ministry as unto the Jews only, and also ‘loose’ Paul with his ministry to “all men,” meaning ALL the unsaved (heathen) of mankind... both the unbelieving (heathen) Jews and unbelieving (heathen) Gentiles. Peter had first used those keys Christ gave him to open the door to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), to the Samaritans after the preaching of Philip (Acts 8:14-17). Now Peter was limiting his ministry, hence after Acts 15, he did not ‘go into al the world’ preaching ‘the gospel of the kingdom,’ according to Jesus’ so-called ‘Great Commission.’ In fact, Jesus had prophesied in Matt. 10:23 of the Jewish remnants limited outreach saying; “Ye will not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of Man be come” at the close of the Tribulation. Jesus’ Great Commission for Israel will only be fulfilled in the Tribulation period and the in Millennial Kingdom.

4. The last point to note with regard to the decision of the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council (~AD51) is that ALL of Paul’s letters date from AFTER the Acts 15. There are No Pauline letters dated from before Acts 15. Now, since Paul’s grace gospel was conclusively established as the ONLY Way of Salvation, Paul could disclose ALL the other teachings the Lord had revealed to him for the Gentile church that he called “the body of Christ.”

ALL Christian doctrine for today’s dispensational age of “the grace of God” comes from Paul’s thirteen letters, all being dated AFTER this momentous decision of the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council Meeting.

CONCLUSION:

Now we can see why the intelligized students of the Bible refer to The Book of Acts is as the ‘fulcrum,’ ‘the hinge’ or the ‘transitional book’ of the Bible, going from the dispensational age of “the Law” and promise for Israel to ... the “dispensation of the Grace of God” for ‘All Men.’

Luke wrote the Book of Acts to explain to the Jews ... WHY the promised kingdom of God had not yet come to Israel on earth. What Luke recorded in Acts 15 fits with his primary purpose of the book, that is to provide a record of the Acts 7 stoning of Stephen and the “fall of Israel” with the temporary ‘setting aside’ of the Nation Israel and her prophetic program.

Paul’s Book of Romans explains the core doctrine this age of the pure grace of God. Much of what we read in Paul’s other epistles is to be seen more in terms of further explanation and encouragement in the knowledge of the formerly hidden relational ‘mystery of Christ’ rather than doctrine. Paul wrote the Book of Romans around the time of Acts 20, saying;

“I am not ashamed of the gospel [of pure grace], for it is the ‘power of God for salvation’ to EVERYONE [both lost unbelieving Gentiles and lost Jews alike] who BELIEVES, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16 (KJV)).

Note how that Paul went to the “Jew first” during the Acts period but not after Acts 28. In that time, with each Jewish synagogue’s rejection of Paul’s message to the Jews, Paul said, “lo, we turned to the Gentiles.” So, Luke confirms that Paul went to “the Jew first,” to those who consistently rejected his grace gospel message toward All Men They rejected Paul’s word beginning with Acts 13:46, and then after Acts 15 in Acts 18:5-6 and 28:28-29.

It’s clear that today, during this age of “the dispensation of the grace of God,” Paul’s pure grace gospel is the sole basis of relationship with God. From the time that Jesus saved Paul, revealing to him “the gospel of the grace of God” ... until ... the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council Meeting, men could be saved by believing EITHER;

Israel’s program with “the gospel of the Kingdom for the Israelites” OR to “the [Gentile] body of Christ” by Paul’s “gospel of the grace of God” for the Gentiles.

But after Acts 15 it was clear that only One Gospel was in force. Only Paul’s

“my gospel” could save “All men” of All races. In other words, for a relatively brief period of time, from the time of Paul’s conversion until the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council meeting, it appears that there were Two Valid Gospels being preached for the Two People Groups of God; one for Jews and one for the Gentiles. After the Jerusalem Council meeting and to this day Paul’s gospel of the grace of God for All Men stands alone.

Jesus of Nazareth’s “gospel of the kingdom” was offered in His earthly ministry to his earthly people of the Nation Israel, those who have an earthly destiny – to “reign on earth” with Christ for eternity (Rev. 5:10, 20:6). It was also then offered to Jews by the Twelve Apostles during the EARLY Acts period, but only until the decision of the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council meeting. The faithful of Israel will one day reign on earth in the Millennial Kingdom, and the forever.

The “the gospel of the grace of God” was revealed to Paul by Christ ... in Jesus’ HEAVENLY ministry ... for God’s HEAVEN-bound people, the Gentile “body of Christ.” So now, after the Acts 15 Council meeting at Jerusalem, ALL Men of ALL Races could be saved ONLY by believing Paul’s “gospel of the grace of God.” All Men, including Jews are now seen by God as being ‘Gentiles.’ All who are saved through faith in Paul’s “gospel of the grace of God” are destined to be Raptured to HEAVEN ... to co-reign with Jesus forever (2Tim. 2:12), “eternal in the HEAVENS” (2Cor 5:1b).

After Christ and His Kingdom were again rejected with the stoning of Stephen, God interrupted Israel’s prophetic program to save and send Paul forth proclaiming “the preaching of the cross” and “the gospel of the grace of God.” In II Corinthians 5:14-21 Paul proclaims “the love of Christ” who “died for all” and to instructs us as to our ministry and work of love.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath Given To Us The Ministry of Reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and Hath Committed Unto Us The Word Of Reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (KJV))

As members of “the body of Christ” during today’s Gentile age of “the grace of God,” it is for us;

“... To Make All Men See What Is The Fellowship of [the unification of Jew and Gentile in Christ Body according to] The Mystery [the formerly secret plan of God], which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,

who created all things by Jesus Christ:" (Ephesians 3:9 (KJV)