

The Contender



"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

The Contender
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Printed Voice of Faith Assembly
MAY 2003
Vol. 35 No. 4



for Bro. Charles Bro. Kevin.

QUESTION: I will go to where we hope to see some things against root fin. Let's be each.

James C. Allen

FROM THE PART BEGINNING- 105

THE CONTENDER

JULY 2019

Continued from page 2

START OF WEEK OF DANIEL DAY 927

REVELATION 11:3 "1260 DAYS"

1ST HALF OF THE WEEK OF DANIEL 3 1/2 YEARS (1260 DAYS)

TRIBUTATION REVELATION 12:7 "42 MONTHS" TIME

2ND HALF OF THE WEEK OF DANIEL

END OF WEEK OF DANIEL




The Fullness of the Gentiles

Vol. 7 No. 4 May 1975

October 2017
Revelation 10 No. 1
Preached September 4-11, 2017

This is the day the Lord made, so let us rejoice and glad in it. Last Sunday on Thursday I mentioned this thing about not saying but I did not say it. You may see it get the idea. "If you hear that," if you hear there are cause there are things you had thought it is going to be word of it not think of this message 107, because about


Continued from page 1

holding it sideways and not realizing what they were looking at, because that is the way the photo was in the magazine. But when you take this picture here and turn it on its side, you can clearly see this shape. Nobody got through in turn this are on its

What does it look like? It looks like the face as though they were part of the Christ. It said the Lord congregation and snack in. At small descend from the funeral, the Bro. Jackson's family had asked that the regular congregation get together for a church before visitors, because there were not enough seats. They snuck in the line that pretending to be part of the

restaurant recently where a man recognized me. He said, "Bro. Jackson's future minister." He who seats in the church, for about four him seats back to every make with in, him and Billy Paul could hear with the strength of his right

Mystery cloud as seen in Life Magazine May 12, 1963

Louis B. Turner, Editor

Raymond M. Jackson
Raymond M. Jackson
App. Cities

The Contender

THE YOUTHFUL SEAL AND SMALL FOLDERS

Let me right that this youth seal has been found in the fourth

P.O. BOX 2348, CLARKSVILLE, IN 47131-2368


the Word Bride hath made herself ready



Rev. Raymond Jackson Faith Assembly Church

Continued from page 1

They acted as though they were part of the congregation and snack in. At small descend from the funeral, the Bro. Jackson's family had asked that the regular congregation get together for a church before visitors, because there were not enough seats. They snuck in the line that pretending to be part of the



JULY 2018

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Vol. 7 No. 4

Printed Voice of Faith Assembly Church

May 1976

The Fullness of the Gentiles



Rev. Raymond Jackson

Text: Romans 11:25-26

THE UNCOVERED MYSTERY

Winding up his third missionary journey, Paul, having stopped off at Corinth, Greece, was visiting the European churches he had founded on his second journey in that area when he writes the letter to the church at Rome expressing his desire to visit them and also in Rom. 11:25-27 shares with the church at Rome, made up partially of Jews, a most startling revelation. Rom. 11:25-27 declares – would not, brethren, that ye should be

ignorant of this mystery (uncovered secret). What mystery is Paul referring to? THE MYSTERY OF WHY NO MORE JEWISH PEOPLE ARE BEING BROUGHT TO THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST THAN WHAT THERE IS!

‘Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that (temporary) blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness (or full number) of the Gentiles come in. Once this is completed, says Paul in verse 26, all Israel shall (then) be saved, Or as the Knox translation says—then the whole of Israel shall find salvation. That is what the scripture teaches Paul declares to the Roman church as he quotes Isa. 59:20-21 for a basis of his statement made in verse 26! In other words Isa. 59:20-21. to Paul, meant one thing—all Israel in that hour would be saved!

How long was Israel to remain in this state of blindness of heart concerning Christ her Messiah? Paul says UNTIL

THE FULL NUMBER OF THE GENTILES BE BROUGHT IN—then the whole of Israel, according to Isa. 59:20-21, find salvation!

PROPHETS REVELATION

BRING

Our lesson today centers around the FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES because it is the FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES that determines when Israel will receive her great revival in the knowledge of who Christ is. And remember when that revival comes to Israel it does not come by the mouth of gentiles, instead it is brought about by two Jewish prophets- one clothed in the spirit of Elijah, the other clothed in the spirit of Moses (Rev. 11:6).

Part I—Background Setting

For Roman Letter

ABRAHAM'S TWO SEED LINES

Practically 100 percent of all who read this article will be gentiles, yet spiritually speaking, if we have been truly born again we are spiritual Jews. By faith in Christ, we become the seed of Abraham, yet by natural genealogy, we are certainly not the seed of Abraham. We are only the seed of Abraham through faith (Gal. 3:29)! Thus, Rom. 11:25 has no application to the spiritual (seed) Jew or spiritual seed of Abraham in any respect but deals precisely with the natural genealogy of Israel.

CHURCH WASTING TIME

Beloved, are you aware Rom. 11:25-26 are the only verses of scripture in the entire New Testament which informs us as to what, why and for how long God did what he did to Israel? In this verse alone we discover for exactly how long that partial blindness will remain upon the people of Israel! Had it not been for the Apostle Paul presenting this hidden truth of God's secret plan concerning his people Israel to the Roman church, no doubt the gentile church over the past 1900 years of grace, mainly because of sentimental reasons, would have exhausted every means available to still try and convert the Jewish people! This may sound harsh, nevertheless it is the only verse of scripture informing us it is completely useless to attempt to convert the true orthodox Jewish people who are blinded to a true revelation of Christ—seeing God himself has blinded this race for this period!

PAUL'S DISCOVERY

It is important we realize in studying our lesson that this particular revelation concerning the blindness of Israel and for how long she would remain blind did not strike the Apostle Paul in the earlier hour of his ministry. It was not until after he began to first notice a certain heartbreaking thing occurring among the Jews of the dispersion living among the gentile nations where he was preaching the gospel. Bear in mind, Paul's epistle declared the gospel of Christ was to the Jew first and then to the gentile.

Rom. 1:16. In this article we desire to explore more fully that powerful thought concerning THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES, and see just when Israel was actually cut off! Shortly before Paul wrote the Roman letter he had just completed the greatest three year revival among the gentiles, conducted at Ephesus that he had ever witnessed in his entire public ministry. Leaving Ephesus an area of Asia Minor approx. 59 A.D. Paul moves over into Corinth, Greece, visiting established churches there around 60 A.D., at which time he writes the Roman letter and includes this startling revelation. Bear in mind the Roman letter is not written to the Roman citizenry; instead it is written to the Christian church at Rome which, in that hour, was made up of converts of both Jew and gentile background.

ROMAN BACKGROUND

CHURCH'S

The Roman church is somewhat of a mysterious church due to the fact little is known concerning its origin, seeing there is no record an apostle ever came to Rome and established this church! Nor up until this hour, 60 A.D., no Jewish apostle (not even Peter) had been in Rome!! Its founding remains a mystery yet as far as historians can determine the Roman church to whom Paul wrote was established by certain Roman Jews who were listed in Acts 2:10 among the devout Jews from all nations visiting Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (33 A.D.). These Roman Jews converted to Christianity returned to Rome and spread this new

found faith among the Jewish colony there. Therefore, no doubt the Roman church was established by Jewish believers and furthermore, note carefully just how much of that Roman letter is strictly addressed to Jewish believers. Perhaps also in that Roman delegation were certain proselyte gentiles who earlier had been proselyted over to Judaism, who visited Jerusalem in 33 A.D. and according to Acts 2 they too, no doubt, received the grace of God. Throughout later years (after 41 AD.) as the gentiles in and around Rome began to hear how the gentiles elsewhere were receiving the gospel from the mouth of Paul, the gentile apostle, that knowledge lets them know if gentiles in other areas are receiving the gospel of Christ, then the gospel is for gentiles at Rome also! Recall, up until 41 A.D. no gentile had received the gospel – until that hour the gospel had been preached strictly unto Jews.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

In 60 A.D. when the Roman letter was written from Corinth, it was written in order to answer certain questions put to Paul earlier from the Roman church whose congregation consisted of both Jew and gentile believers. Note who that first portion of the Roman letter, beginning with chapter two, is addressed to! Paul directs this portion to the proud exalted Jewish Christian in the church at Rome who thinks himself something because nationally his heritage is Jewish. However when Paul reaches Rom.11:13 he is directing his speech strictly to the gentiles as he speaks to the gentiles

magnifying his office, he tells them they are the branches of the wild olive tree grafted in (verse 17). No beloved, Paul is not rambling in his speech.

He knows exactly what he is driving at! He is trying to establish some good, sound doctrinal teaching in this church. Undoubtedly they are suffering terribly for the need of some straight forward New Testament Bible doctrine taught to them. No doubt Paul has heard how within the Roman church there still remains after 60 almost 30 years after Pentecost. A certain racial friction on the Jewish side who still boasts over their Jewish heritage and background. Remember Jews had always been taught the gentile's nature was nothing more than a dog's because that is the kind of nature most gentiles displayed in that hour!

ADDRESSED TO JEW

Paul's Roman letter, beginning in chapter 2, dealing with those Jewish Christians is firm, abrupt, and straight to the point! Who else could we possibly think he was addressing other than Jews when he said, thou (in the church) who boasts thou art a Jew and boasts in the law. etc. (Rom, 2:17-24)? Paul tells these Jews the name of God is continually blasphemed among the gentiles because of you. (NO doubt Paul's thought here refers to Isa 52:51

Reading this Roman letter can't you see how desperate these believing Jews who, having been left much to themselves throughout the years since

Pen-tecost not having benefited from Paul's ministry or any other apostle. were in desperate need of some sound New Testament teaching of the truth if they were to grow and prosper as a healthy believer in the faith in holiness and true righteousness for this how!

CHURCH NEEDED SOUND TEACHING

Reading the entire context of Romans 2, one is quick to notice Paul wastes no time in first bringing into line the thinking of that Jewish Christian in relation to New Testament salvation, who definitely from what Paul says has a long way yet to go before being firmly established in the truth. First off we note, beginning in Rom. 2:25-29 Paul is quick to inform that Jewish Christian that his circumcision has not made him anything in this grace age! No, says Paul, it is not your circumcision which has made you righteous!

In the next few chapters we see him turning to types and shadows which the law itself portrayed and out of that line of thought Paul goes over into chapters 9-11 where he changes his line of thought and begins his dramatic buildup concerning Israel's new relation to God and her blindness in part, etc., in order the gentile be grafted in—building it all up to his explosive revelation of Rom. 11:25-26 showing throughout the remainder of the grace age (from 60 AD.) only a tiny percent of Israel could ever be saved until after the FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES would be brought in when at that hour the blindness of

heart would be lifted and the nation of Israel would return to seek the Lord with all their heart!

Moreover, verse 25 lets us know it has only been up until a short time ago (roughly 3-4 years) before 60 A.D. that Paul himself had fully understood what God in reality had been trying to show him for several years concerning the attitude of his own people in relation to the gospel he preached. Paul always tried to reach his Jewish brethren first with the gospel before ever presenting it to the gentiles. Little did anyone realize before that hour that God was soon to completely sever Israel from his redemptive program for a considerable period of time—that was, until the fullness of the gentile be brought in. The true revealed message of the gospel would then leave the gentiles and return to Israel where at that time under the ministry of two prophets Israel, not a mere few but the nation as a whole would be saved!

JEWS REACHED 17 YEARS AFTER PAUL'S CONVERSION

Contrary to popular gentile opinion, this one and only true gospel of Christ which was first presented to the Jew and then to the gentile, may I say when it was handed over it remained to be the same gospel preached to the Jew first! Up until around 52 A.D. the gospel of grace had steadily been reaching out to both Jew and gentile. And may I say, had all Israel already been cut off around 52 A.D., roughly eight years before Paul's revelation to the Romans, neither Peter, James or any other Jewish apostle knew the first

thing about it. Because we hear Paul discussing an event which took place roughly 17 years after his conversion saying, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel of grace for the Jew (Gal. 2:7-9) declares for He, the Holy Spirit, who has teen at work in Peter for his apostleship to the Jews has been at work in me, Paul says, for the apostleship to the heathen. And don't forget both men were preaching identically the same gospel. Gal. 2:9 declares James, Cephas and John, the so-called pillar apostles (to the Jews) gave Barnabas and me (17 years after Paul's conversion at Jerusalem) the right hand of fellowship. Get this, don't miss it!! With the understanding that we should go to the heathen and they to the Jew (Wm. Trans. Gal. 2:7-9). Note, 17 years after Paul's conversion the Jewish apostles are still determined to go to the Jewish people with the gospel of Christ. Paul visited Jerusalem after his first missionary journey. Therefore, who beside Paul up until around 56-59 A.D. could have known whether or not time would come when it would be totally unprofitable to preach the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus to the Jewish race!

By tracing the route of the church through the years as recorded in the Book of Acts, first with the Jew, that with the Gentile, we will be able to see where this gospel of grace began to slowly be weaned away from the Jewish race and brought strictly unto the gentiles. To do this tracing will require we study the 28 chapters of Acts and perhaps when we finish our study we will be better able to understand why the Holy Spirit

concluded the writing of the Book of Acts exactly in the spot it is concluded!!

DEALINGS WITH JEWS PHASES OUT

Remember you will always have your particular individual Jew, here and there, through time who professes to have been converted to the truth of the gospel of Christ. However, most of them wind up in some Babylonian program which certainly is not the truth. Therefore I want you to know, even before the close of the first church age you did not have any outstanding dealings with God with the Jewish race in relation to true revelation to Christian faith. God's primary dealings with the Jewish race, as you shall see from the Book of Acts, phase out after approximately the first few generations after Pentecost. And for almost 1900 years God has worked exclusively among the gentiles, not to convert all gentile people, though he would do so if they would only believe. Nevertheless, according to the Apostle James, Acts 15:14, who quoted from Amos 9:11-12, saying God would take out a gentile people for his name, then return to Israel to build again the fallen tabernacle of David. Remember according to Rom. 11:25 this gathering out a people from among the gentiles continues until the great mass of gentiles needed has become a part of the church.

WILD OLIVE BRANCHES GRAFTED IN

We gentiles are referred to in Paul's revelation as the wild branches from the wild olive tree which were grafted in, completely contrary to nature, into the pure root of the tree (of eternal life) which is the blessed promises of God in making the ungodly gentiles by nature become partakers of his grace! Paul sums up his revelation in Rom. 11 with a stern warning—don't you gentiles be bragging over what has befallen the Jewish race in order for you to be grafted in because the Jews who are the natural branches were broken off because of their unbelief in the true revelation of Christ, (Rom. 11:17-20). Why were they broken off? In order we undeserving gentiles who had lived so far below God's standards of the law which he gave to Israel to keep them in line, as unworthy as we are, be grafted into such blessing—In order we may be made into the image of his dear Son in his holiness, goodness, and mercy.

GENTILES BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF CUT OFF

Paul warns the gentiles not to be puffed up over this great blessing, seeing it won't endure forever. No, God simply permits it until the time required to get his quota out from among the gentiles for his name. Then, because of the gentiles' unbelief in that true revelation of Christ, the gentiles will in that hour be faced with what Israel was faced with when she was cut off. Like Israel the gentiles also shall be cut off and Israel shall be grafted back in. Get this! The same attitude of unbelief will exist among the gentiles toward the true revealed

gospel at the end of the age as was the unbelief, which faced Israel in the beginning of the grace age when she was first cut off!! In other words, God blinded his own people, whom he dearly loved, in order to graft into the tree of life the ungodly gentiles. Don't forget, Paul declared in Rom. 11:24—it will be easier for God to graft back in the natural branches of the tree than it was for him to graft in the wild olive branches from that wild olive tree! God spared not the natural branches, Paul says, because of their unbelief. Take heed you gentiles lest he spare not thee. Rom. 11:21-23.

BENEFITING FROM ISRAEL'S IGNORANCE

We gentiles who had prospered from Israel's ignorance should realize we don't have any right nor claim we can present to be grafted into the tree of eternal life. Never forget, it is only because of his divine mercy that we gentiles were permitted this unmerited favor of grace. As gentiles we should fall upon our face and never cease to give thanks to our God for what he has graciously done for us! Furthermore, we should realize that had God not blinded Israel as a nation of people and they had all accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah for whom they were looking, which certainly they would have done had God not blinded them to that reality, we could not have entered his grace. Remember, Paul was the first apostle to ever know God intended to do it in this manner and that revelation came only near the close of his ministry, not in the beginning, Peter, the apostle, strictly

to the Jew, never once spoke of it in this manner. Had it not been for this secret revelation revealed in Rom. 11:25-26, we have every reason to believe because of the sentimentality involved, the gentiles realizing how the gospel came first from the Jew would have through the ages spent millions of dollars and exhausted every physical effort on a needless and useless venture of trying to convert the Jewish people to Christianity—it simply cannot be done. God closed their spiritual eyes, he blinded them for a season. However this blindness in part has worked out for the benefit of the gentile race.

Part 2 — Israel's Elected Seed Preserved Rom. 11:1-5

In order for us to understand more clearly God's great buildup leading step by step unto the completion of this startling revelation concerning blindness of the entire Jewish race, I would like to show you first how God took out of the entire Jewish world population a selected ordained number of Israel, Rom. 11:1-5, before blinding the rest for a season, turning the gospel strictly over to the gentiles. To see this truth unfold we must journey through at least the historical high-points of the 28 chapters of Acts which leads us up to 60 A.D. when Paul released to the church world the startling revelation concerning Israel's future relation with God. Furthermore, we realize although these historical dates we will be using may not be exactly correct in relation with each important event they will, nevertheless, be close enough to furnish us a time factor from

which to work as we see the complete transfer of the gospel go from Jew to gentile! Reading between the lines of these various events or stepping stones, watching each development unfold will furnish us with a clearer picture of how each event did become a stepping stone in God's plan to completely transfer the gospel of Christ to the gentiles and push Israel completely out of the picture. In our study it is our desire to show for that first generation before pushing Israel out of the grace picture God, according to Rom. 11:1-5, did take out an ordained number of many thousands of Israelites, bringing them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. When? Before Israel was finally cut off! Paul declared this approx. seven years before 70 A.D. when Titus destroyed Jerusalem along with the Jewish temple.

EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

First off we note from the gospels that for approximately 312 years the Jewish nation of Israel had been affected or steered by the fleshly ministry of Christ. In the spring passover season of 33 A.D. he was crucified thus closing out his period of natural ministry, yet his church, or his mystical body, was born in the earth on that day of Pentecost, 33 A.D., 50 days after the resurrection of the saviour. The church was born in the very midst of all the effects of what that earthly ministry of Christ had left imprinted on the minds of the Jewish people while in Israel. On that Jewish Pentecost feast day came the birth of

the church consisting of about 120 Galilean Jews only. What happened on that day through the testimony of that 120 unto devout, orthodox Jews gathered in Jerusalem from all nations surrounding the Mediterranean Sea to attend the Pentecost feast day—no less than 3000 of these Jews heard testimonies and praises of God's glory in their own home language wherein they were born and the results of that miracle added 3000 more Jewish people to the church. And get this, from house to house throughout Jerusalem in months to come the word of God was spread and fanned into one of the greatest revivals Israel ever witnessed in her history! According to Peloubet's BIBLE DICTIONARY the normal population of Jerusalem in Christ's time was doubtless about 25,000-30,000. During festivals the number was greatly increased.

5000 JEWS CONVERTED

The first great miracle of healing concerning a 40 year old lame man at the gate Beautiful was not long after Pentecost. I want you to notice from the reaction of this one healing by the apostles that Israel is by no means at this hour cut off from the gospel because Peter and John used this miracle to present a salvational gospel message unto many thousands on the temple grounds. Their sermon produced 5000 believers, all Jews' Listen to Peter and John during their invitation to these Jews to come to Christ! In Acts 3:17-19 they are heard to say—brethren. I know that through ignorance you denied Christ before

Pilate and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you.

DONE IN IGNORANCE

You did this in ignorance as well as did your rulers! Peter declares everyone of them was in ignorance as to what they did, nevertheless the things which God foreshadowed by the mouth of all the prophets—how that Christ should suffer, he has fulfilled those prophecies. God will show mercy and forgive you, therefore repent and be converted that your sins be blotted out!! Beloved, God forgave 5000 Jews that day. Where? In Jerusalem. Thus I declare unto you a great revival has now broken out in Jerusalem in so much when the apostles were called before the Council they accused them of having filled all Jerusalem with this doctrine. Even before the Sanhedrin the apostles pleaded that they too should turn to Christ! Other similar incidents could be cited showing God still extended forgiveness to Israel in those early years after Pentecost! We are told in Acts 5:14 large numbers of Jewish men and women kept joining the disciples more and more readily than ever as they became believers in the Lord Jesus. Who? Jews in Jerusalem and all the surrounding towns and areas.

BEGINNING TO GATHER ELECTED SEED

Don't you see, God is taking out an ordained selected number of Jews whose eyes he has opened to the truth

throughout the land before he totally cuts Israel off in her unbelief! A close study will show you this great Jewish revival conducted in Jerusalem from Acts 2 through Acts 7 in which the Jewish church was instrumental in ministering, was not only to all Jerusalem but get this, to cities and towns, villages etc., around Jerusalem and lasted for an approximate 3 1/2 years in which Jews from all walks of life was reached with the gospel! That unforgettable outpouring of the Holy Ghost seen in Jerusalem for those 3 1/2 years shows Peter ministering strictly to the needs of the Jewish race bringing thousands upon thousands to salvation! No, by no means was the nation itself converted any more than were all gentiles converted when the gospel came unto them, but untold thousands of Jewish people are finding Christ as Messiah God!

UNUSUAL MIRACLE

Watch what happened in the very highest peak or heat of that Jewish revival! Jews were so stirred at the power of God and faith so stimulated as thousands walk in this newfound faith, scripture declares in Acts 5:15-16 that the Jewish people (first in Jerusalem now begin to bring their sick, suffering, oppressed loved ones and friends into the streets of Jerusalem whereby merely the shadow of Peter walking past might fall upon them and they might be healed! If the healing of one lone man brought 5000 to Christ sometime before this, what must such stimulated acts of faith be now doing in turning multitudes to Christ. The 16th verse declares this

was so effective that even from towns around Jerusalem crowds continued to pour into Jerusalem bringing their sick ones, those troubled with foul spirits, etc .. and God healed everyone of them: Does that sound to you as if God has turned his back on his own people and won't give them a revelation? **NOT AT THIS POINT!**

You will find that Jewish revival in Jerusalem running from 33 into better than 36 A.D. Yes, great political persecution from time to time rose against the apostles, arresting them and placing them in prison only to have the angel of the Lord conic and release them, declaring to the apostles to return to the Jewish temple area and teach the words of this life to all the Jewish people! Had you been there you would have admitted the Jews were having the greatest revival you ever heard of!

STEPHEN FIRST MARTYR

The church was born in the midst of revival and as that Jewish revival, centered in Jerusalem, hit its peak and leveled off it had lasted about 3 1/2 years. Timewise, we are somewhere in the vicinity of 37 A.D., now we see God begin to take another step in unfolding his plan to eventually place the gospel into the hands of the gentiles. In the midst of the fervor of that Jewish revival conducted at Jerusalem where multitudes from all towns around were coming in a man by the name of Saul who served on the Sanhedrin court, no doubt having heard the testimony of the apostles when called into questions, is now

brought into the picture. This man Saul is well versed in the law and undoubtedly is one trying to make a name for himself because in the midst of this great Jewish revival God permits a Holy Ghost filled deacon called Stephen, whom God greatly uses in miracles, to preach in the streets and warn the Jews to accept Christ as Messiah God—he is the first man to die a martyr's death!!

The amount of what transpired during the peak of that Jewish revival is recorded in Acts 7. Remember, God knew exactly where to step in and begin to shift the order of events in order to later swing the gospel over entirely to the gentiles. Watch the steering hand of God on these events as Stephen became the first martyr. Recall how in the great commission given by Christ to his disciples he stated—you shall be witnesses unto me, first in Jerusalem, second in Judaea, third, Samaria and fourth, out into the uttermost parts of the earth. Would you not say the great commission of Christ had been well carried out in Jerusalem for some 3 1/2 years? Yet, what man knew the exact time to move out of Jerusalem into these other areas—only God knew that!

PERSECUTION MOVES GOSPEL TO OTHER AREAS

When time came to witness to Jews elsewhere God did not necessarily say to the Jewish church in Jerusalem, Now church, it is time to move out. No, instead he simply permits conditions to begin developing that will move the Jews out into other

Jewish areas with the gospel. Because of this Jewish revival blazing in its peak, Jerusalem had simply become more and more filled with believers as this new doctrine is taught by the apostles, Acts 5:28, because by this time they are bringing sick people from everywhere to Jerusalem. Keep in mind, it has been Jerusalem which has been the center attraction or the focal point for this Jewish revival. In those days that Jewish apostle. Peter is not seen going any place other than ministering there in Jerusalem. Those revival fires are drawing towns and countryside to Jerusalem. For approximately 3 1/2 years Jerusalem had been the very center of the Jewish revival in Christ, while Capernaum had been the center of Jesus' revival. Later we shall see where Ephesus in Asia Minor becomes the center for the gentile revival around 53 A.D.

Once the Jewish revival at Jerusalem begins to reach its peak and word was spread everywhere in that vicinity we see everyone pouring into Jerusalem where the action is. God knows if something isn't done to change the situation Jerusalem would simply become more and more filled with believing Jews. People are just that way – they always want to be where the action is. Once they are attracted to something they do not want to leave it. Moreover, this is strictly a program of God and he knows exactly when and where and how to do something which fulfills his word. Acts 8:1 tells how he allowed this man Saul, who he later intends to greatly use, to enter the picture after Stephen's death and harass the church at Jerusalem.

SAUL'S PERSECUTION AND WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHED

When Stephen was arrested in Jerusalem Saul had consented to his death by willingly holding the coats and watching the excitement of Stephen's head being smashed. This we might say, was one of the Jewish church's severest persecutions. Following the brutal slaying of Stephen, scripture declares in Acts 8:1 this huge sizable church began to be scattered abroad at the persecution of Saul as he was entering from house to house taking prisoners, both men and women. The believers were scattered throughout all the regions of Judaea and Samaria; all the way down to Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch. Acts 11:19 – And get this, they still do not know anything about preaching the gospel to the gentiles because the Bible says they are preaching and witnessing the gospel, to none, but Jews Only. Whether you think that right or wrong God would not permit that huge scattered multitude of Jews fleeing Jerusalem, going way down into Phenice, Antioch, and Cyprus to preach to any gentiles whatsoever! No, they preached to Jews only and the revival continues to spread mightily. Now it is the Jews in dispersion who are hearing and receiving the gospel. Many believed on the Lord Jesus and later a great church was established at Antioch During that same period of time, moving toward the close of 39 A.D., Saul, not satisfied in the damage he has done to the church at Jerusalem, goes before the Sanhedrin to get official Jewish permission that he could go outside the jurisdiction of Jerusalem and in whatever town he

found these Jewish believers embracing this new faith he would bind them in chains and return them to Jerusalem to stand trial.

This revival, having stirred Jerusalem, has truly gotten next to these priests and political leaders and no doubt Saul thinks within himself it is time to put an end to all this fanaticism now bursting forth also in other Jewish communities. God allows Saul's thinking to run in this fashion in order to bring it unto something else. In Acts 9:1 we see Saul as he is still breathing threats and murder against the Jewish disciples of the Lord having gone to the high priest requesting letters to the Damascus synagogue that if he find any men or women belonging to this way he might bring them in chains to Jerusalem.

Many believers were in Damascus who fled the Jerusalem persecution. Timewise we are somewhere around 35 A.D. Here we see Saul being drawn into Almighty God's plan just as that Jewish revival reached its height. Just when Saul wants to end it all God is going to use this man to begin something new. On that road nearing Damascus, having already arrested many disciples and feeling he truly is accomplishing a great mission which surely will bring him much recognition among the Jewish officials, suddenly around him flashes a light from heaven. Dropping to the ground he heard a voice in Hebrew speak out of the light, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9 :4- 8, 22:9-11, 26:9-18) which means

—do you find it hard to stand up against the big shots! Paul must certainly stand up against great leaders. His conscience was not condemning him as some teach!

A STARTLING DISCOVERY

Lord, who is it? asked Saul. To Saul's utter astonishment the voice answered back. I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you persecuteth. What a shocking reality for Saul to learn the one he has addressed as Lord, calling himself Jesus of Nazareth is none other than the God of the Old Testament. Without any argument or discussion Saul humbly asks, Lord, what do you want me to do? Arise, said the voice, and go into Damascus and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. In other words, you will receive your instructions in Damascus. Saul, now blind from the brilliance of the light, though his spiritual sight more awakened than ever, goes into the city and stays with a certain Jew named Judas. Judas seemingly was a popular name in that hour although there was only one Judas who sold out the Lord.

SAUL—A CHOSEN VESSEL

Now it so happened in Damascus, because of that persecution in Jerusalem, some believers had fled there. Across town in his room praying, a converted Jewish priest by the name of Ananias is seeking the Lord in prayer. Three days have passed since blind Saul arrived at Damascus and Saul too, was in his bedroom praying because as yet much

of this remains a mystery to Saul. In Ananias' house he is receiving a vision and the voice of the Lord says, Ananias! To which he answers, I am here Lord! Acts 9:11.

Go to the street called Straight and ask at the house of Judas for one named Saul from Tarsus for he is now in prayer and has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in, lay hands on him and restore his sight. Ananias' first reaction was one of reluctance declaring, Lord, that is a terrible man. I have heard much evil concerning him, what he did to your saints in Jerusalem and why he is here in Damascus. See, word had already reached them in Damascus concerning Saul's trip there. Ananias, says the Lord, go on, he is a chosen vessel unto me. Here for the first time the voice of God utters what he has destined for this man to become. Go on Ananias, this man is a chosen vessel to bear my name before the gentiles and to suffer many things. A prophecy concerning Saul of Tarsus that as yet he himself does not know. Ananias obeys God, goes to Judas' home on Straight Street, enters the door and says, Brother Saul, (Acts 9:17-A9,22:13).

THREE THINGS SAUL RECEIVED

Ananias walks into Saul's room more aware than any living soul as to the divine call and purpose upon Saul's life—Brother Saul, said Ananias, the Lord even Jesus whom you saw on your way to Damascus has spoken to me to come and pray for you that you might receive your eyesight and be

filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 22:14 declares Ananias told him that the God of their fathers had chosen him that thou shouldst know his will and should be his witness unto all men of what he had seen and heard—that he was a chosen vessel to bear his name among the gentiles. That from him he would be the means of salvation to the ends of the earth. Rise up and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus'—which Saul immediately did.

FROM DAMASCUS TO ARABIA

I use to think when reading this account in Acts 9 that Saul remained in Damascus for a few weeks or months and then returned directly to Jerusalem because seemingly that is the way it appears to read by the way Luke recorded it in Acts 9:26-29, however, according to Paul's testimony to the Galatian church, this is not true! Writing to them Paul declared after his conversion he neither went up to Jerusalem to consult with them who were apostles before him but instead of returning to Jerusalem from Damascus he went into Arabia (Gal. 1:17). And from Arabia he much later returned again unto Damascus, the place of his conversion. Then some three years later (all this time required approx. 3 years) he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him 15 days. Other than James the Lord's brother who at the death of Christ was not even converted but 4-6 years later is not only converted but is an apostle of the church, he spoke with no other apostle. Afterward Paul says, he came

in the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ but (believe me knew of his past reputation) they had heard only—he who persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed—some years ago! And who should know better than Paul the route of his journey. Therefore laying between verse 25-26 of Acts chapter 9 is at least a 3 year gap period in Paul's ministry. This has simply been Luke's way of making a long story short using as few statements as possible. Nevertheless Paul declared in Gal. 1:16-17 that from Damascus he went down to Arabia for awhile then back to Damascus and only then did he go to Jerusalem. Paul, speaking to the Galatians, gives a personal account of his ministry whereas Luke gives only main historical points.

TRANSITION PERIOD

Therefore watch something—if Saul's conversion took place, say in 35 A.D. and he spent roughly 3 years in Arabia before coming to Jerusalem to consult with Peter concerning this revealed gospel that would bring the timetable up until about 38 A.D. Get this! 38 A.D. is the year historians date the transition of the sacred account of one major event concerning Peter's ministry over unto another major event. In other words, this is the year God is beginning to change, the order of events in Peter's ministry, moving him out of Jerusalem, visiting the churches and slowly placing him in position to be in Joppa later to carry the gospel to Caesarea and open the

door of salvation to the gentiles in Acts 10! The year 38 A.D. would be exactly the year Paul returned to Jerusalem for that 15 day visit with Peter and James, two of the pillar apostles to the church, sometime before God sent Peter out of the city! 35 A.D. was the time of Saul's conversion in Damascus, during which time at Jerusalem a great Jewish revival was blazing forth!

REVIVAL SUBSIDES

In that revival it was Peter who was the center attraction, however the hour arrives when that Jewish revival begins to subside. And as it did God was dealing with a new man in Damascus. What was God preparing to do? Soon he would change the order of events but who, other than God, was aware of this. No one, not even Peter! You never find Peter using that scripture of Rom. 11:25 as Paul did. The revelation was not for him! Recall, we are examining from scripture the various steps God used in bringing about Paul's revelation of Rom. 11:25 into complete fulfillment!

AFRAID OF SAUL

Back to Acts 9:26—when Saul did finally visit Jerusalem, Jewish believers there still had a terrible memory of Saul's actions there 3 years previous, hauling people off to prison, even voting for their death while on the Sanhedrin court, the disciples were absolutely afraid of Saul and could not believe he was a true disciple of the

Lord, thinking perhaps it was merely a trick of Saul's to worm his way into their good grace and later turn on them. Luke records how the Jewish disciples in Jerusalem still had that dreaded fear of Saul three years later when he returned to Jerusalem. But Barnabas brought him to the apostles declaring how he had seen the Lord in the way and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Remember he spent no time conferring with the apostles other than Peter and James but conversed with Peter about 15 days. Gal. 1:18-19.

PAUL—NOT INSTRUMENT FOR JERUSALEM

Because the Jews sought to kill him, the brethren took him over to Caesarea where he was sent to Tarsus. You see because many disciples of the Jewish church still remembered that persecution of Saul during the heat of their great revival and because of the fear of Saul, which still lingered all of his sincerity could not persuade the disciples to accept him. God allowed it to be this way because Paul was not to be an instrument used in Jerusalem. Barnabas, knowing Saul's testimony will never be accepted in Jerusalem, takes him to Caesarea some 70 miles northeast of Jerusalem to the Roman seaport city on the Mediterranean and sends him back to Tarsus to his childhood land. For a period of years the account will close on Saul.

PETER VISITS OTHER AREAS

Let us re-examine the program of God in 38, All as God prepares to bring something else into focus. Saul, having visited Peter for two weeks, left Jerusalem, going back to Tarsus. As that great Jewish revival having now subsided, from the latter part of 38 A.D. coming over into 39 A.D. and into the introduction of 41 A.D., a period of better than two years during which time the scriptures in Acts declare Peter to be now moving out of Jerusalem and passing slowly through the various regions where that great Jewish revival has spread establishing Jewish churches in regions of Judea etc. Here we witness God pushing Peter's ministry out of Jerusalem. This lets me know things have definitely simmered down in Jerusalem. Up until this hour Jerusalem had been the very center of the great Jewish revival. Watch, as that revival simmers and the great effects where thousands and thousands of Jews are still accepting Christ has tapered off, God is leading Peter toward the Mediterranean Sea where shortly somewhere around 41 A.D. Peter will carry the gospel to Caesarea introducing it to the gentiles, Acts 10.

STILL REACHING JEWS

Passing slowly through the various regions of Judea, visiting the various churches which were established from that great revival in Jerusalem where in all have now found rest and are greatly edified walking in the fear of the Lord and note, the Holy Ghost is still adding to the church daily those who should be saved. Acts 9:32-43 tells how Peter, passing through all

these quarters, makes his way down to the Jewish saints at Lydda. Note how Peter is now moving from one locality to another. Generally it was a call of prayer for the sick which moved Peter from one place to another—always praying for the sick and preaching the gospel, visiting the various churches which had been established off the Jewish revival in Jerusalem. From village to village he goes, every step bringing him closer to his ordained destination to preach the gospel to the gentiles at Caesarea in 41 A.D. We note only two of the places Peter visits stands out in scripture by name and one of those places is Lydda where a man bedfast for 8 years, sick of the palsy, was healed. From that one healing we are told in verse 35 that all Jews who dwelt in Lydda and Sharon saw the results of this healing and turned to the Lord.

SENT TO JOPPA

At Joppa a certain woman named Dorcus died and the Jewish disciples at Joppa were sent to nearby Lydda to get Peter. Peter prayed and Dorcus was brought to life. And many Jews, verse 42 says, believed in the Lord! Does this sound as if in this hour God has turned his back on Israel. For some time Peter tarries in Joppa. How long? we do not know, but the Holy Ghost doesn't lead him anywhere else because from here he will go to Caesarea to the gentiles with the gospel.

WHY MISSING YEARS

God has taken Peter out of Jerusalem. This step shows the great heat of revival which drew the Jews up to Jerusalem has now died out. This does not mean God is not still opening the eyes of Israel toward Christ and performing miracles. It simply means this great drawing card in Jerusalem is now beginning to diminish once God is ready to change the order of events to introduce the gospel to the gentiles. Peter, the man with the keys to the kingdom, has visited all these local Jewish churches of Judea and surrounding areas and has now moved into Joppa waiting for new orders from the Lord concerning the next place to go. Timewise, we are somewhere between 39-40 A.D. because the chronology of Acts for this period listing all these events, jumps from 38 A.D. to 41 A.D. Why those three missing years in Peter's ministry? Those three years are not jumped for no reason at all—Peter is still alive! To me it is merely Luke's way of condensing a lengthy period of time into as small a detail as possible relating to Peter's ministry out among the Jewish churches once he left Jerusalem. Recall, Saul all this time has been in Tarsus. Do you see the stepping stones beginning to take shape? Having left Jerusalem Peter has finally arrived at Joppa, some 35 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Timewise we are somewhere around 41 A.D. Watch chapter 10 unfold as a second great step in the ministry of this great Jewish apostle.

Part 3 — Gentiles Receive Jewish Gospel

FIRST GENTILES TO RECEIVE GOSPEL

Cornelius, the gentile Roman centurion is in prayer and has seen a vision. Recall while Cornelius at Caesarea had this vision, the Holy Spirit has led Peter to Joppa, placing him in position for a new stepping stone in the route of the gospel going to the gentiles. No, Peter is not at Jerusalem, he is at Joppa, better than 30 miles south of Caesarea. Paul is in Tarsus waiting on the Lord! The angel of the Lord visiting Cornelius in 41 A.D. (according to historians) informs Cornelius to send men to Joppa and inquire of the house of Simon the tanner and there ask for one called Peter who will come and tell you all the words of this life or in other words, how to be saved, Acts 11:14. Shame on those people who always want to belittle the Apostle Peter, pivoting what he told 3000 Jews to do in Acts 2:38 against what they think Jesus meant in Matt. 28:19. My friend, Peter had the revelation of Matt. 28:19 when he told the 3000 to repent and be baptized everyone of them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost! People will argue—but Peter did not know what he was talking about! He must have, every apostle stood in perfect agreement with him on that day. He was the star of the revival in Jerusalem and we find no place in scripture where Peter ever changed his message (even Paul testified he preached the same faith, Gal. 1:23). And what's more, here we see an angel from heaven dispatched to a gentile in Caesarea who is praying telling him to

send for Peter and he would give him words whereby he might be saved! It doesn't seem that heaven thought he had the wrong message, does it? No beloved, Peter was moved out of Jerusalem over a lengthy period of time, preaching the same gospel he preached at Jerusalem, moving toward Joppa visiting the various churches on his way and encouraging them to stand for the Lord! May I say, every Jewish disciple since Pentecost had obeyed Acts 2:38.

Up until 41 A.D. the gospel has gone strictly to the Jewish race and Jewish churches have been established everywhere throughout the land of Israel. Cornelius and his household are the first gentiles to ever hear anything concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those Jews scattered from Saul's persecution around 34 A.D. in Jerusalem had now gone as far as Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch and the scripture is careful to declare they preached to none but Jews only; Until 41 A.D. only Jew! had heard this gospel! Only Jew: had experienced that blazing revival at Jerusalem! However around 41 A.D. God is adding something new to his plans. This lets me know the almighty looked down from glory and said the hour is come to set in motion and fulfill Amos' prophecy (Amos 9:11-12). Time to change the order of events, I have dealt with Israel about long enough. Watch the beauty of the stepping stones in the transition of the gospel as the gentiles are also added to the program of grace. Many gentiles in that hour were seen leaving their old pagan ways to accept Judaism. Judaism appeared to be more sensible

and pure than most idolatrous pagan religions of the gentiles. No doubt Cornelius was one such man who was proselyted to Judaism. As a Roman gentile, no doubt he had studied Judaism, Cornelius, the scripture says, was a devout, just man, who had a regular prayer life and one who gave much alms to the Jewish people. Recall it was his alm giving that had come up before God as a memorial. Some 30 miles away in the coastal town of Joppa unbeknownst to Peter) God has placed his man, waiting to bring the words of life to the gentiles. It is noon-time in Joppa, several days after Cornelius' vision in Caesarea and Peter is hungry. While waiting for dinner to be prepared he goes upon the flat housetop to pray. Suddenly, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Peter, and what happens in Peter's vision lets me know Peter still has much of that old Jewish nature and attitude about him. No, God had not given Peter any previous revelation concerning the gentiles.

VISION OF UNCLEAN THINGS

As Peter prayed he fell into a trance and saw a great sheet let down from heaven. Peter being hungry. God uses his hungry stomach as a type to get his point across. The sheet let down from heaven contained unclean animals, creeping things etc. Arise Peter, kill and eat. No, Lord, said Peter, you know there has nothing common or unclean ever gone into my mouth. See how orthodox he was! The Lord said what I have cleansed call thou not unclean! Three times the vision appeared and vanished. What did it

mean? Peter had no idea but it signified there would be three unclean gentile men (as far as Peter was concerned) who would come knocking on the door inquiring for him. While pondering the vision Peter could no doubt hear male voices below enquire for him. The Holy Ghost said go down and doubt not. I am glad the Holy Ghost knew how to talk to people in those days and do you know they knew how to listen to what the Spirit said. Coming down the stairs Peter could see three gentiles (who are unclean to the Jew). Immediately they began to inform Peter about their master's vision. Well, thought Peter, I am a Jew. I have never gone into the house of a gentile. Nevertheless, the Lord told me to go and doubt not. See, even now Peter isn't aware the gospel is going to the gentiles! in relation to God's program what does Acts 10 mean? It simply means God is taking new direction in his grace program as Israel will now slowly begin to be cut off. Remember, for around seven full years the church at Jerusalem after its birth has spread its influence strictly to the Jewish nation or race and thousands of Jews have answered it's call, becoming a part of the church. With what happens in Acts 10 we now know the Jewish revival which burned so brightly in Jerusalem for a number of years when cities and villages came into Jerusalem to learn of Christ, that revival has climbed to its peak and diminished!! As it does Peter's ministry is seen spreading out over a much wider area. Although the gospel has been strictly to the Jew until 41 A.D. God now sets stepping stones to include something else—

THE GENTILE CHURCH QUESTIONS PETER

Peter did not go to Caesarea alone. Acts 11 informs us six Jewish brethren went with him. Entering Cornelius' house Peter breaks a record. It is the first time for any Jew to ever preach to a group of gentiles (Acts 15:14). Recall how Peter, after returning to Jerusalem, was confronted by the church for going unto gentiles, saying, you went in unto men uncircumcised and did eat with them! Shame on you! However, after Peter rehearsed the entire matter to the Jewish brethren they rejoiced to know that God had granted repentance unto life to the gentiles as well as to the Jew. Acts 11:1-18.

HOLY GHOST GIVEN

What had happened at Caesarea with the gentiles receiving the gospel had already spread back into Judea and Jerusalem by the time Peter returned to Jerusalem. Facing this group of gentiles at Cornelius' house, Peter still did not know why he was there, but he was not doubting the Lord. When Cornelius rehearsed the vision to Peter we hear Peter say by divine revelation—of a truth I see (with spiritual understanding) God is no respecter of persons! Every nation that fears him and works righteousness is accepted of him, Acts 10:35. Peter doesn't know anything to preach but Jesus and he had gotten only so far in his message when the Holy Ghost fell on the gentiles. God knew Peter would be a little reluctant to lay hands on the gentiles for the Holy Ghost as he did

on the Samaritans and other Jews to receive the Holy Ghost, Acts 8:14-17, therefore God did it this way! God was quickening by the Holy Ghost every word the gentiles were hearing. It was the word of life falling into their hearts. God seeing those hungry hearted gentiles, simply overrode Peter's ignorance as to what he was doing and gave them the Holy Ghost! When Peter saw these gentiles no doubt shaking and quaking under the power of God and speaking in tongues. Peter says to these six reluctant mystified Jewish brethren who came with him—who can forbid or deny water that these gentiles should not be baptized!

BAPTIZED IN WATER

How would Peter have known what to say concerning baptism had not God granted repentance unto the gentiles filling them with the Holy Ghost. Therefore, since God has done that, Peter knew somewhere along the way they would have to be baptized. Therefore we hear him say, who can forbid these the privilege of being baptized in water seeing they have received the gift of life the same as we at the beginning! God, doing it this way, shattered every doubt of those reluctant Jews that what the gentiles were now receiving was not absolutely real! Don't forget it has been better than 8 years since the Jewish church was born and nobody but Jews had ever heard the gospel. Therefore Peter, seeing what God has already done in giving the gentiles the Holy Ghost, commands the gentiles also to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus

exactly as he commanded the 3000 Jews over eight years before (and the thousands in between!) Keep in mind, I am not trying to establish any fixed point of years, our only interest is the approximate span of time before Israel is cut off. All I want you to see here is from the birth of the church at Jerusalem to the peak of the Jewish revival which has now definitely tapered off has been approximately seven or eight years. Chapters 10 and 11 covers about the same time period of around 41 A.D. — we have now entered into another stepping stone of God's plan in getting the gospel into the hands of the gentiles.

JEWS REJOICE

Luke records in Acts II how Peter rehearses the conversion of the gentiles to the church at Jerusalem and verse 18 declares, the Jews glorified God for granting repentance unto life for the gentiles. Yet may I say while the Jews were rejoicing over the fact the gentiles have received salvation, little do the believing Jews realize that this will mean Israel before long will be totally cut off from the grace of God. When? Just as soon as God has received his elect Jewish seed out of Israel. He intends to preserve in that grace age.

SPOTLIGHT ON ANTIOCH

A new stepping stone now develops in God's program as he prepares to send the gospel to the gentiles. Our new stepping stone is connected to a church at Antioch. The setting of Acts

11:19 actually reaches back and connects us to Acts 8:1 around 34 A.D and refers to Saul's bitter persecution when he made havoc of the Jewish church and the believing Jews fled from Jerusalem. Scripture says part of that fleeing group journeyed as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch preaching the word of God to none but Jews only. Keep in mind the picture, they are fleeing from Saul's persecution! Some of these Jews were men from Cyprus and Cyrene who later came to Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus to the Grecians. The hand of the Lord was mighty with them and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord at Antioch. For a number of years the church at Antioch has grown. Jews everywhere have rejoiced over gentiles receiving salvation at Caesarea in 41 A.D., yet unaware to them God is slowly moving away from the Jewish race.

GENTILE BELIEVERS AT ANTIOCH

Jerusalem (after 41 A.D.) hears about this great revival at Antioch which the Jews started down there and decided to send Barnabas to look the situation over. Barnabas, thrilled at what he sees in the disciples, exhorts all of them to cleave unto the Lord. He remains at Antioch for a period of time and still more people (including Gentiles) are added unto the Lord under his ministry there. Having been at Antioch for a while and knowing the gentiles are now receiving the gospel, Barnabas remembers Saul who is patiently waiting upon the Lord in Tarsus. Barnabas remembering the prophecy

given over Saul in Damascus some years before—you shall be a light unto the gentiles—departs from Antioch to Tarsus to seek Saul. No doubt in Barnabas' mind he is saying I am going to Tarsus to get God's apostle to teach the gentiles here at Antioch. Barnabas, being a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, knew enough about prophecy to know that time had arrived to bring in that gentile apostle, Paul. Note, when he finds Paul he did not bring him to Jerusalem instead he takes him to Antioch. Those were the silent years for Saul of Tarsus and scripture says virtually nothing about what he did, though you may be sure he did not backslide nor did he lose his revelation of the gospel of Christ he received in the Arabian desert, he had simply been at Tarsus waiting on God.

SAUL AT ANTIOCH

Finding Paul he brings him to Antioch where for one full year they assemble themselves in the very church Saul's Jerusalem persecution had been responsible for establishing! For one year Saul and Barnabas teach the people. Recall it was at Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. When? Under Saul's ministry!

JERUSALEM FADING FROM SPOTLIGHT

The scripture now begins to lay more emphasis around Antioch than it does on Jerusalem. Jerusalem is fast losing its pre-eminence. The great Jewish revival now being over has been

responsible for placing Jewish churches throughout the land. At that time Jewish prophets from Jerusalem visited Antioch. one of whom was Agabus and through the Holy Spirit he prophesied concerning a great famine that was soon coming over all the world; a famine which occurred in the reign of Claudius. The disciples at Antioch decided to send a contribution to help the Jewish brothers living in Judea. They sent it to Jerusalem to the elders by Barnabas and Saul who, while in Jerusalem, picked up John Mark, Barnabas' nephew and brought him back to Antioch. It shall be over this man, John Mark, which divides the ministry in later years of Paul and Barnabas. Antioch is to become a springboard for Paul's missionary journeys into gentile territory.

PERSECUTION JERUSALEM

AT

Before examining Chapter 13, which is the next scene, or step concerning Paul's ministry, let us touch briefly chapter 12. Recall in chapter 11 Paul and Barnabas for one year have enjoyed the great blessings of God and mighty growth in the church while at Jerusalem, according to chapter 12, it is just the opposite! The Jerusalem church is encountering one of its most severe persecutions to have arisen since Saul's persecution. This lets me know, as far as preeminence is now concerned, God has struck the church in Jerusalem. The preeminence is now being felt elsewhere, namely Antioch. Little will be mentioned about Jerusalem in the light of preeminence after chapter 12. According to the

Jerusalem persecution covered by chapter 12, it is the same period of time seen throughout 42 A.D. while Paul and Barnabas at Antioch have been having a glorious time. Herod, the king of Judah, in order to please the unbelieving Jews, stretches forth his hand to vex the Jewish church by first killing James the apostle and next arresting Peter who he intended to kill after the Jewish passover. However God is not ready for Peter to die, seeing he has yet a little more work for him to do, therefore the angel of the Lord released Peter from prison. A prayer meeting at the home of John Mark's mother has been going on in behalf of Peter and Peter returns to her house where this meeting is being held. He knew exactly which house to show himself. A damsel answered Peter's knock and informed the Jewish prayer warriors Peter was outside. It can't be, you only saw his angel, they replied. No, he is at the door, replied the young lady. Once admitted into the house, Peter rehearses the full account of his release, and prophets at Antioch lay hands on Saul and Barnabas commending them to the work of the Lord.

PAUL'S 1ST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Timewise we are around 44 A.D. and God is ready to change the order of events which shall soon begin to affect the grace age. Bear in mind, even though Paul now begins his first missionary journey around 44 A.D. it still won't be until 53 A.D. that the gentile age of grace is officially ushered in! Having lifted the

preeminence of Jerusalem, God shifts the spotlight into gentile territory as Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark are ready to depart on what is known as Paul's first missionary journey among the gentiles. Recall, Paul is still not aware God will soon totally cut the Jewish race completely out of his program until he receives his quota among the gentiles, then he returns to graft back in the Jewish race with the gospel. Here somewhere around 44 A.D. (though we cannot be precise on any date). God is beginning to lay out his blueprint for the gentiles of which you and I became the beneficiaries. Paul and Barnabas goes down to Seleucia (seaport of Antioch) and from that port sails to Cyprus. Reaching Salamis, a town in east Cyprus, the apostle to the gentiles, the man with the commission to be a light to the gentiles did not go unto the gentiles and begin to preach the gospel—NO— the scripture declares reaching Salamis Paul began to preach God's message in the Jewish synagogues! With John Mark as their assistant they go throughout the entire island as far as Paphos.

REASONS JEW VISITED FIRST

We might pause here to say in every town throughout Paul's ministry he always went first to the Jewish community! Why? Paul had two reasons since the gospel was to the Jew first—(1) To get as many Jewish converts out of each Jewish community as possible and (2) when he could no longer preach to the Jew because of opposition which always raised up after a period of time, he

would always use his Jewish converts as contacts to that particular nation, district or community in order to gap the language barrier which might exist between him and the gentiles. Remember, he would always preach to the Jews irregardless to whatever area or country he was in, in the old mother tongue Hebrew, though when he got out among the gentiles he might need an interpreter and the Jew converts of each area served for that purpose among the gentiles.

VISITS SYNAGOGUE ON SABBATH

In whatever town Paul was in where there was a Jewish synagogue, on the sabbath day he went. What other day than the sabbath would you expect Paul to go to a Jewish synagogue to preach? The synagogue service was always on the Jewish sabbath day. You could not expect him to go on Tuesday or Wednesday or even the first day of the week to preach to the orthodox Jew! Orthodox Jews worldwide observe the sabbath as their worship day, time period from six o'clock Friday evening until six Saturday evening Jewish days, you recall, begin at six in the evening and end at six in the evening.

At Paphos in Cyprus Paul cursed a false prophet and Jewish magician named Bar-jesus, an intimate friend to the governor of the Island, Sergius Paulus, who had sought Barnabas and Saul to come and teach him God's message. Bar-jesus stood between Paul and the gentile governor trying to hinder the message from the hungry

hearted governor who was simply carried away at the Lord's teaching. Paul, cursing the false prophet in the name of Jesus, commanded he go blind for a period which he did, and the governor believed.

ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA

Leaving Paphos, Paul's party sails across to Perga in Pamphylia where John Mark left the party returning to Jerusalem. From Perga, Paul and Barnabas now traveling alone arrive in Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath Day they again go to the Jewish synagogue. After the law and prophets had been read the leader of the synagogue, noticing they were strangers, asked if they might have any message of encouragement for the people and if so feel free to speak. Note, it was always the Jewish synagogue Paul went to first to get as many converts as possible because as yet the door still stands open for the Jews to be brought into God's program of grace.

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE FULFILLED

Discerning their reaction and knowing only a few are receiving his message verse 39 declares Paul continues by saying, and by him all believers are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. That statement did it! Remember, it was such a statement as this that the Jews at Jerusalem in later years accused him of making. Recall the Jews said

wherever this man goes he condemns Moses. Sensing all this rebellion toward his message here at Antioch of Pisidia. He now quotes something pertaining directly to the Jewish race, especially to his congregation—something which up until this hour had never before been uttered! It is an Old Testament prophecy which has hung for centuries, spoken by Habakkuk Hab. 1:5). Looking upon the facial expression of his congregation and knowing the bitterness of resistance they are putting forth, Paul says in verse 40 – beware therefore lest that come upon you which is spoken by the prophets! Remember, this prophecy was never spoken by Jesus, Peter, nor any of the other prophets in the land of Israel. Why? Because it is not a prophecy for the Jews in the land of Israel, instead it is a prophecy strictly for the Jews in dispersion among the gentile nations and Paul was the man to use it! Why? Because the prophecy refers to Paul. Paul says, beware brethren that what Habbakuk spoke doesn't fall upon you. Behold, ye despisers. and wonder, and perish: for I (the Lord) work a work in your days or better still—I am doing a work in your times) which you will not at all believe though a man declare it unto you! Beloved that man to declare this was PAUL and the Jews in dispersion were the recipients of this prophecy. Their unbelief was blinding them. It is in this Jewish synagogue in gentile territory God impressed Paul to use that prophecy!

JEWS BLASPHEMED

When the Jews had all left the synagogue the gentile people begged them to repeat this again the next sabbath. Many of the Jews and religious gentile proselytes, devout converts to Judaism, aligned themselves with Paul and Barnabas who asked the apostles to tell them more concerning this unmerited favor of God. The next sabbath almost the entire town came out to hear God's message. When the Jews who had heard Paul the week before and who also received this prophecy of warning in Hab. 1:5, laid across them, saw this great crowd of gentiles, they were completely filled with jealousy and began to contradict the statements made by Paul, even blaspheming. Had they not fallen into exactly what Habbakuk warned! Behold, ye despisers, and wonders, and perish for I am doing a work in your days, a work you won't believe though a man declare it unto you! A man had declared the message of Christ unto them, even told them to seek repentance through his name and be forgiven of their sins. Now they are seen a week later to blaspheme!

GENTILE HEARD GLADLY

Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said to these Jews—It was of necessity the word of God should first be spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES! For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the gentiles that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the

gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Acts 13:46-49. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

No wonder the Jews were filled with envy when they saw the entire town come out on the next sabbath to hear Paul and Barnabas preach the gospel because they had been in that area all this time and what they had to say had attracted very few gentiles. For hundreds of years they tried to proselyte but here comes a little Jew along with a new message and brainwashes everyone of them. See, time has come for the gentiles to hear something, hear something that would not require them to be circumcised in order to believe: would not have to keep the law of Moses or pay any attention to the eating of meats nor observing moons, feasts and all that stuff. For centuries the Jews had tried to convert the gentiles to that style of religion, gaining only a few proselyted converts. No, God would not allow them to succeed in their task but here stands the whole town of Antioch of Pisidia listening to this Jew called Paul. Naturally the Jews were jealous and provoked to envy, speaking against the things Paul taught, contradicting and blaspheming. Can't you see him running around the townfolk saying, don't pay any attention to him. Stay away from his message, it is of the devil. Timewise we are around 45 A.D. yet may I remind you Paul isn't fully aware of why Israel isn't receiving the message in dispersion. As yet he has not received his revelation written in 60

A.D. Paul says to these Jews it was only right we give you first chance at this gospel but as the Lord commanded I am set as a light for the gentiles. Now look, those very words are falling on gentile ears and a revival is breaking forth among the gentiles, though it will still be quite a few years yet before Paul has a revival anywhere near the impact as to what Peter had at Jerusalem. See the picture, Paul used an Old Testament prophecy on the dispersed Jews and like the prophecy said, they rebelled, they would wonder and perish. He uses a New Testament prophecy given by a New Testament prophet (you are a light to the gentiles) and the gentiles simply drank it up! Watch their reaction. They were glad and glorified the Lord. No, the town wasn't all converted but the scripture said everyone who was ordained to eternal life believed. I can see them standing in that crowd as Paul's words echo out across the great throng of people saying glory, there is one Jew who makes some sense! He is telling me I can be justified, I can be saved, I can have my sins forgiven and I don't have to pay any attention to what that group up at the synagogue is teaching! Can't you see God using Paul to pluck that duster of gentile fruit around 45 A.D? Timewise we are somewhere around 13 years after Pentecost. Up until now it has been primarily the Jew who has received the gospel. Up till this period many thousands of Jews have accepted Christ as the true Messiah God. In two sermons recall we saw 8000 Jews reached.

The unbelieving Jews stir up the devout citizens of high rank in the town of Antioch creating a persecution

against Paul and Barnabas, driving them out of the district. Paul and Barnabas simply shook the dust from their feet as a protest against what they did and proceeded to Iconium. At Iconium again they went first to the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks came to believe. But again as usual those Jews who refused to accept the message stirred up the minds of the heathen against the brethren. Yet in spite of this the apostles remain for a considerable period. The Jews having now divided the town, bring a heavy persecution against them.

PROBLEM AT ANTIOCH

Completing that missionary journey, Paul leaves Asia Minor, eventually returning to Antioch (Acts 14:26) where he informs the church concerning the blessings of God upon his journey. Here is a period of time historians fail to break down into a period of years however I call your attention to Gal. 2:1 which sheds some light on the period, where Paul states after returning to Antioch he found the Antioch church all disturbed over a teaching which had been going on during their absence. Certain Jews had come through Antioch from Judaea telling the church especially those gentile converts, unless they would be circumcised (as had been a custom with all Jews during the law age) after the law of Moses they could not be saved—but the beauty of it was—THEY WERE ALREADY SAVED! Nevertheless it was causing much confusion therefore a period

somewhere between 46-48 A.D. we see Acts 15:2, as well as Gal. 2:1-14 being fulfilled.

JERUSALEM COUNCIL

After much heated discussion with these brethren Paul and Barnabas are commissioned to go to Jerusalem to discuss or find out what this is all about. Recall, according to Gal. 2 Paul says it had been 14 years since he had been to Jerusalem to discuss anything with an apostle. Gal. 1:18 declared three years after his conversion he went to Jerusalem and stayed 15 days and talked with Peter (and James the Lord's brother). Gal. 2:1-10 Paul says after 14 years I went back to Jerusalem. Why? It is in this period Acts 15 is fulfilled. he went back to Jerusalem to ask Peter if he sent those men to Antioch who said you had to be circumcised to be saved. But Paul says after they finally reached Jerusalem and talked with the church and apostles, they were sure no apostle sent these men to Antioch to teach circumcision because Paul declares in Gal. 2:3, Titus who had gone with them, being a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised before being given the right hand of fellowship. And when Peter, James and John who seemed to be the pillars saw the gospel to the uncircumcision had been committed to me, Paul says, they gave us the right hand of fellowship saying, you go unto the heathen Paul and we will go to the Jew (or circumcision).

APOSTLES TO CONTINUE PREACHING TO JEWS

Note at this hour the Jewish apostles, according to their testimony, would still be going unto the Jews to try to reach them with the gospel of salvation! Luke records in Acts 15:12 in this meeting between the Jews and gentiles at Jerusalem, after Paul and Barnabas told of the signs and wonders which God had wrought among the gentiles. James responded with the following statement. Simon has told us how God at first through his ministry did so graciously visit the heathen to take out from among them a people in his name. This is perfectly in accord with the prophets, says James the Apostle, as he quotes Amos 9:11-12—After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen dwelling. I will rebuild its ruins and set it up again so the rest of mankind can earnestly seek the Lord, And all the heathen who are called by my name (Wms. Trans. Acts 15:14-17). When did God say he would return to Israel? After he had taken the people of the gentiles out for his name. Still such a statement as this may be eye opening as to what is going on but it certainly does not match the startling revelation later given to Paul which he delivered to the Roman church were saved following the birth of the church? Nevertheless he will later in Acts 19, experience one!

MACEDONIAN CALL

Up until now Paul's revivals have merely been citywide. On his second missionary journey he purposes to go into the northern regions of Bithynia which today is northern Turkey, verse 7. Sometime in the night (v. 9-11) Paul saw a vision of a man of Macedonia.

across the Dardanelle Straits of Greece calling to him, Come over here (in Europe) and help us! Therefore Paul's second missionary journey found him going into the eastern part of Europe where he establishes the Galatian church and went on into Corinth, Greece where he also established a church and abides with this church longer than at any other place previous. According to Acts 18:11 he spends 1 1/2 years here.

Part 4 —The Gentile Revival

VISITS EPHESUS

Closing out his second missionary journey Paul leaves Corinth, heads back to Antioch and comes to Ephesus in Asia Minor, better known as Turkey today which is destined to become the very city God will use this gentile apostle to spread forth a revelation of truth that would be fanned into a mighty revival. Out of this one revival which will last approximately three years God will use the spirit of this revival at Ephesus to overshadow the spirit of the entire gentile first church age called Ephesus, beginning around 53 A.D. extending to 155 A.D. Although this is exciting, let us not get too far ahead of our story. Paul leaves Corinth, Greece comes to Ephesus. As usual, at Ephesus Paul goes straight to the Jewish synagogue, Acts 18:19-23, With him are two Jewish converts whom he met in Corinth, who under the persecution of Claudius Caesar had been kicked out of Rome. Their names are Aquila and Priscilla. Paul speaks in the Jewish synagogue at Ephesus and is begged by the Jews

there to remain longer and tell them more about this message of salvation and this Jesus who forgives sins. I can't stay any longer, says Paul, I want to be in Jerusalem in time for the feast. However I will return. Yes, he must return because here at Ephesus God is going to give him the greatest gentile revival that ever takes place in all his ministry. There is nothing quite like it because it will be in this city in the next three years that Paul will see something about his own people, the Jew, in dispersion that will lead him into the revelation he presents in Rom. 11:25-26. It is here at Ephesus in the next three years as he witnesses the reaction of his own people toward the greatest revival in gentile history that Paul becomes completely aware that blindness in part has happened to all Israel until the fullness of the gentiles be brought in, when God would again graft back in Israel and save the nation! No, not just 144,000 Jews who will be living in the land at that how! That 144,000 of all Israel were sealed in by the Holy Spirit in Rev. 7 & 14 for a precise purpose! In Paul's revelation, Israel is to be saved (more than 144,000).

APOLLOS' CONVERTS DISCOVERED

Moving quickly into Acts 18:22 Paul has returned to Antioch to again report on his second missionary journey to the church. Later he begins a 3rd missionary journey. Now watch something! We note in the first missionary journey he took Barnabas and on the second journey he took Silas. We are somewhere around 56

A.D. when Acts 19:1 comes into the picture. Paul has returned to Ephesus alone and back to the Jewish synagogue he goes where something new has happened. Here he met certain disciples who are Apollos' converts. Acts 18:25-28. Apollos was a Jewish lawyer, knowing only the baptism of John. who had come to Ephesus in Paul's absence and preached in the synagogue. Aquila and Priscilla had the opportunity to hear him. Knowing he did not have the revelation in its completeness as was being preached in that hour, Aquila and Priscilla take him aside and explain to him the way of the Lord more perfectly. However, note, God wouldn't allow Apollos to go back into the synagogue and preach his new revelation. Instead he is recommended to the church at Corinth, Greece and he goes there to preach. Now Apollos has the full revelation as taught by Peter and Paul and the rest of the fivefold ministry who preached the same gospel. When Apollos preached at the synagogue he received 12 converts but he could not teach them anything but the baptism of John.

RE-BAPTIZED— FILLED WITH HOLY GHOST

Paul alone returns to Ephesus and comes upon these 12 converts who know only John's baptism, asking them if they had received the Holy Ghost since Greek says when they believed. To which they answered, we know not whether there be any such thing. Keep in mind Paul is not aware of anything which is about to happen but beginning with these 12 men God

is going to take this man's ministry here at Ephesus and give him such a revival that his lame will be spread to the ends of the earth. Paul takes these Jewish disciples at Ephesus who know only the baptism of John, to a waterhole, re-baptizes them in the name of the Lord Jesus, lays hands on them, and the Holy Ghost comes on them and they speak in tongues and prophecy! This did something for Paul.

REVIVAL FIRE BURNS 3 YEARS

Back into that Jewish synagogue he goes and teaches each sabbath day for three months. Acts 19:8; preaches until it seems he will get all their converts. Then it wasn't long until the chief rabbi, elders and men of authority began to create a fuss. Paul simply takes all his Jewish converts, moves out of the synagogue separating them from the Jewish congregation, and watch what happens! Going across town, verse 9 says, he rented a school building and from this school building will go forth a revival fire lasting 3 years, the likes the gentiles have never seen and I repeat, it is during this period of time of such revival that Paul is brought to the realization that Israel has been blinded to the truth: How does he know this? Gentiles throughout Asia come to Ephesus during this three year period, get converted, carry the revival fires back to their own community and gentile churches spring up everywhere! Seven of those churches, mentioned in Rev. 2 & 3 lit their fire of truth off the revival in Ephesus!

PAUL'S DISCOVERY IN REVIVAL

While Paul witnessed the gentiles gloriously receiving the gospel he was grieved and saddened to see his own people would have nothing to do with it. Ephesus was the capital city of Asia, it was also the central worship headquarters of the Goddess Diana. Diana, this woman religion was the religion all Asia paid homage to. The silversmiths making little statues of Diana were almost put out of business by the revival among gentiles in Asia conducted by Paul. Paul went into that school building with his Jewish disciples and began to preach Christ, we are told in Acts 19:10 this continued for a space of two years so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jew and Greek! But it was something concerning the reaction of these Jews during this period of time that let Paul know the Jewish days were numbered as far as God dealing with them in a grace period was concerned.

WHY ACTS 19:1-5

SO PRECISE

This beloved we see was a genuine revival. Who was it for? The gentiles of course. True, the gentiles were now receiving the same visitation of God that we saw earlier presented to the Jewish nation at the beginning of pentecost. Note three outstanding similarities concerning both these revivals at Jerusalem and Ephesus which shows they are genuinely the

same. Among the Jews water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ was preached, Acts 2:38. Among the gentiles as this great revival began at Ephesus we see water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus being preached, Acts 19:1. As a matter of fact we see 12 men to begin this revival being rebaptized in the name of the Lord! Secondly, the disciples on the day of Pentecost received the Holy Ghost and spoke in other languages. Acts 19:6 says at the beginning of this gentile revival which spread for three years throughout all Asia, beginning at Ephesus, 12 men received the Holy Ghost, spoke with tongues and prophesied. This is not mentioned to create some doctrine but only to show the two revivals, one for the Jew, the other for the gentile is by the same Spirit! Thirdly, to show you the gentiles are going to receive as great a revival as did the Jew in the beginning; Recall in Acts 5:12-14 in the heat of this great Jewish revival in Jerusalem the power of God was so great that people brought their sick, laying them in the street whereby Peter's shadow might fall upon them that they might be healed The sick from nearby towns were brought to Jerusalem for the same purpose.

SPECIAL MIRACLES

What do we have in Acts 19 in the gentile's revival for 3 years where all Asia came up to Ephesus to hear the gospel that equals that? Acts 19:11-12 tells us God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul in so much that from his body were sent unto the sick anointed handkerchiefs and aprons

and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out of them! Yes, to the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus the people throughout all Asia brought aprons and handkerchiefs of those who lived in far off mountain village areas, sick and oppressed of spirits, etc. There was so much virtue in that handkerchief or apron once it had been brought in contact with Paul's body that it healed the sick the same as did the shadow of Peter when he walked down the streets of Jerusalem!!

GENTILE REVIVAL ALL ASIA HEARD

For two years Paul preached Christ in this school building. Note, like Peter who remained in Jerusalem during the great Jewish revival and all Judaea came to Jerusalem, likewise did Paul remain in Ephesus and all Asia came to him! True, I can see the people of the cities and towns of Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea coming to Ephesus receiving the true gospel, receiving the Holy Ghost and returning to their own cities of Asia where gentile churches sprang up. Seven are mentioned, you recall, in Rev. 2 and 3. The people of these gentile cities of Asia came to Ephesus to hear Paul, lit their revival fires of truth from Paul's revelation and returned to establish local gentile churches in their own area. No, during these three years Paul remained in Ephesus, he did not venture into those cities and establish the churches! Asia came to Ephesus during that three year period and heard Paul preach the

gospel in that schoolhouse (Acts 19:10. Note it is this revival spirit flowing from Ephesus which is going to exemplify and overshadow that spirit of the first age, the beginning age of the seven gentile dispensational ages of grace. The first age you recall was called Ephesus (Rev. 2:1),

REALITY DISCOVERED THROUGH JEWISH REACTION

In 59 A.D. after preaching and warning for three years, day and night with tears, Paul feels led to leave Ephesus. He purposes to cross back into Greece and visit the churches around Corinth, visiting the churches he and Silas had previously established on his 2nd missionary journey. We might say leaving Ephesus completes Paul's missionary journeys as far as visiting new territory and establishing new works are concerned. We have seen God's great apostle to the gentiles take three separate missionary journeys, the last one brought him to Ephesus alone which was by far his greatest. For three years from one locality all Asia heard the word of the Lord! Gentiles rejoiced everywhere concerning this man's ministry. Paul noticed two things in every city he had gone, he saw the happiness of the gentiles and the hardened reaction of the Jews in their cruel unbelief toward this message. Yet Paul said the gospel was to the Jew first, then to the gentile. What is wrong? It is breaking his heart! Writing to the Romans in 60 A.D. he even stated he would gladly be accursed forever from the presence

of God for the salvation of his people Israel!

ISRAEL IS BLIND

During the last three years Paul saw the fruit among the gentiles as to what God was doing with His ministry, yet, he was able to move very few Jews in comparison with the truth. At Ephesus, no doubt, he saw thousands and thousands of gentiles converted to Christ and as he fervently prayed for the salvation of Israel sometime during that three year period God opened his eyes to the frightful fact.

ISRAEL IS BLINDED!

Until God gets his quota from among the gentiles Israel as a nation is cut off! This wasn't a happy thought but it was a reality which had to be faced. Somewhere in that three year period I am convinced God gave Paul the full revelation of which he wrote about in 60 A.D., Rom. 11:25-26.

ROMAN EPISTLE DATED 60 A.D.

As the gentiles were being lifted up into the fullness of accepting the truth of the gospel, slowly but surely the Jews were being tapered off. It was at Corinth while visiting these churches he had founded on his second missionary journey that certain questions reached him from the church in Rome, Italy. Thus in 60 A.D. he writes the Roman church answering their questions, expressing his desire

to visit them in Rome also and then leaves them with the revelation of the Jews being blinded and cut off until the FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES come in. Please notice he never mentions this in any of his other epistles The Roman churches he is writing has within it both Jew and gentile converts. How could Paul say such a thing as blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the gentiles be brought in' unless God had given him a revelation to this fact. How could he be sure of such a thing unless he had seen with his own eyes the terrible reaction of the Jew's continued rejection for a period of three years throughout Asia; turning against the greatest revival ever known in the history of the gentiles! Because here unquestionably their reaction was fully demonstrated! He witnessed the great influx of gentiles but he also witnessed and was saddened to see the unbelief and criticism of the Jews in all these areas throughout Asia, how they rebelled and blasphemed Christ speaking against what God was doing. This let him know God had truly cut Israel off as he was now bringing in the gentiles. And recall within ten years after he writes his letter to the Roman church, Rome has moved in and crushed Jerusalem and the temple leaving the Jews with nothing!!

MORALS OF GENTILES

Briefly, let us examine the nature and low morals of the gentiles in the hour the gospel came to them. Read carefully Romans 1 and there you will see their low, moral standing. The

Roman—gentile world of that hour was filthy! May I say, aren't the social morals of today much the same as shown in Romans 1 when the gospel first found the gentiles wallowing in their low morals. True beloved, as the Holy Spirit in his convicting power is slowly leaving or lifting off the gentiles, seeing the FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES is almost complete, it is these same old spirits of immorality that possessed the gentiles before the day of the gospel rescued them that are invading the gentile world once more! And it has been the Holy Spirit for 1900 years that has suppressed these immoral spirits while God gathered a people from among the gentiles for his name. However what do we now see as the Spirit of God slowly leaves the gentiles, lifting his convicting power from them, these same old spirits that made headlines in Romans 1 are seen rushing back in to take over the gentiles once again!

Today we are witnessing a new morality arise in the land since the 60's and new laws are being legislated which makes such things legal, things the church for centuries frowned upon. What is it? It is nothing new, it is simply the working of these immoral spirits which have been suppressed by the Holy Ghost for 1900 years! like a mighty flood they are now moving back in over the gentiles as the conviction of the Holy Ghost is lifted off the gentiles, ready to return to Israel!

WARNING TO EPHEM AND ELDERS

Leaving Europe Paul sails back near Ephesus. He is coming through various cities passing near Ephesus when he calls for all the Ephesian elders to meet with him for what will be the last time they will ever see him. It was sad. Brethren, you know how for three years I warned everyone, Paul says, night and day with tears. I have not withheld anything from you, however after I leave, false prophets will enter in among you not sparing the flock, likewise men of your own selves. Paul says, will rise up with erroneous teachings and draw away disciples after themselves! Also he tells the Ephesian elders his great desire to now visit Rome. Recall several months ago while in Corinth he wrote to Rome.

PROPHECIES OF WARNING IN ALL CITIES

On his way to Jerusalem. no doubt to see his old friend Peter with whom he spent 15 days once discussing God's revelation and seeing how they both were preaching it exactly alike. He now stops off at Caesarea where he visits the Christians. especially the Evangelist Philip's home, who once was a Jerusalem deacon. Now he is an evangelist and also has four daughters who have the gift of prophecy. They are having a little service and Agabus the prophet who came to Antioch and prophesied concerning the drought that would cover the land, Acts 11:27-28, walks into the service at Philip's house. He is very business like, he does not greet Paul or anyone. Instead he walks over and picks up Paul's coat and says thus saith the Holy Ghost, the

man this coat belongs to will go to Jerusalem be bound and turned over to the heathen authorities! Everyone became fearful for Paul and begged him not to go to Jerusalem. Paul replied, why weep and to break my heart, I am ready not only to be bound but to die at Jerusalem, Acts 21:8-13. Beloved, this is by no means anywhere near the first time Paul has heard warning of what will happen in Jerusalem! When he said goodbye to the sorrowful Ephesian elders he told them he did not know what lay in store for him at Jerusalem but the Spirit had spoke in every city saying bonds and afflictions await me, Acts 20:22-23. Paul had continually been warned something bad would happen when he set his foot in Jerusalem. He expected it! We are somewhere in 60 A.D. and we are nearing the end of Paul's evangelistic journeys because when Paul arrived at Jerusalem he not only found the streets filled with converts from the great Jewish revival, no doubt he found Peter and saw the church at Jerusalem.

ASIAN JEWS STIR CITY

He had not been there very long when he ran into trouble because the first time he visited the temple, which will be destroyed in 10 years, a mob of old agnostic, blinded Asian Jewish critics were waiting for him and they were ready to stone him when the authorities rushed in, arrested Paul and took him to jail; But not before he had been able to give his last testimony of his conversion and ministry among the gentiles unto this Jewish people in Jerusalem. My, what a testimony he

gave. You will read his testimony beginning with the 27th verse of Acts 21 through chapter 22, and you will also see how angry the Jews were when they heard it!

PAUL CAPTURED

Note if you will please, it was of all the Jews the Jews from Asia who spotted him in the temple area and feeling his very presence there desecrated the temple began to stir up the crowd against him. Paul is carried to Caesarea under heavy guard. The Jews meant to kill him at all cost. 40 of them had even taken an oath, they would neither eat nor drink until Paul was dead. This plot was overheard by Paul's nephew who reported it to the officer in charge. Fearing for Paul's life he removes him under heavy guard from his prison in Jerusalem to Caesarea. 200 men with 70 mounted soldiers and 200 armed with spears left by night with Paul to bring him safely to Felix the governor at Caesarea. To make a long story short and see how God takes him to Rome where our lesson ends. Paul remained in jail at Caesarea for two years. The Jews even came to Caesarea to the governor and spake against him, declaring Paul was nothing but a perfect pest, a disturber of peace among Jews throughout the world and the ringleader in the sect of the Nazarene! They considered his attempting to enter the temple as an act that desecrated the temple. For two years Paul remained in the prison at Caesarea.

TESTIFYING BEFORE KINGS & RULERS

Closing his two years, Felix the governor was succeeded by Porcius Festus who wanted to gratify the Jews therefore he left Paul in prison. A short time later King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to pay their official respects to the new Roman government. Having remained over for a few days, Festus tells Agrippa about this prisoner he has and what a strong case the Jews have against him. Agrippa along with Felix agrees to hear Paul. Standing in chains before these high officials Paul now fulfills another portion of scripture concerning himself where he will testify before kings and rulers. Again before this majestic court Paul gives his same testimony he has given on numerous occasions before concerning his conversion and the ministry God has given him.

His testimony greatly disturbs King Agrippa who says, Paul you almost persuadeth me to be a Christian. But Festus shouted aloud, you are crazy Paul, much learning has driven you crazy. After Paul had been sent from the room and the dignitaries continued to talk among themselves about Paul, they agreed he had done nothing worthy of death and Agrippa said to Festus, he might be set at liberty had he not appealed to Caesar, the Emperor. The point is, they have to send him to Rome. Recall, while in the stockade at Jerusalem two years before when the Jews had vowed to kill him God appeared to him in a vision and said, fear not Paul, as you have witnessed for me in Jerusalem so shall ye witness for me in Rome. Paul knew one day he would get to Rome although God did not tell him how he

would get there. Being Roman born he has appealed to Caesar. Timewise we are somewhere in the latter part of 62'.

A.D. JOURNEY TO ROME FROM CAESAREA

They are ready to set sail from Caesarea to Rome, Italy. Paul, along with a number of other prisoners are turned over to the Roman Centurion who goes aboard a ship bound for the ports of Asia. After a few days at sea because of strong winds which are against them, they change onto another ship also bound for Italy. The winds are quite contrary as they sail away and all along the way they experience difficulty. A considerable time goes by, according to verse 9, and Paul warns them by saying men I see this voyage is likely to be led by disaster and heavy loss not only to the ship and cargo but also our lives. Nevertheless, the centurion was more influenced by the experienced captain of his ship rather than by what Paul said, so they continue on. It wasn't long until the ship was snatched by violent wind. A few days of this and the entire cargo was thrown overboard. A few more days with neither sun nor stars to guide them and the storm continuing to rage it seemed all hope was vanishing.

SHIPWRECKED

Having gone a long way now without food Paul said to them, I warned you you should have listened to me and not sailed from Crete and you would have escaped this disaster and loss, Acts

27:21. Nevertheless I beg you to keep your courage for there will not be any life lost, only the ship, for last night the angel of God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood by my side and said do not be afraid Paul, you must stand before the Emperor Caesar and lo. God has graciously given to you the lives of all who sail with you. So men, keep up your courage for have confidence in my God that it will come out just as it was told me. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island. See, Paul already knew that! For 14 nights we drifted helplessly on the sea.

SNAKE BITE & ITS EFFECTS

It is interesting to note here that although the centurion paid little attention to Paul's warning when they first came aboard, we note from verse 27 through 42 the centurion is now taking orders not from the captain but from Paul since he knows more about what is taking place than the others do! At last they reached the island of Melita Paul spoke of where the natives showed them remarkable kindness, even budding a fire in the downpouring rain and cold. Paul, wanting to help, gathered a bundle of sticks to place on the fire and because of the heat, a viper came out of the wood and fastened itself onto his hand. Seeing the wild beast fasten onto his hand the natives said one to another, beyond a doubt this man is a murderer and though he was rescued from the sea justice will not allow him to live! But Paul simply shook the beast off into the fire and suffered no harm. The natives waiting for him to become swollen and die were shocked when no

swelling occurred and nothing unusual happened to him. Now they think he is a god!

The father of Publius, governor (first man of the island) who extended to the party great hospitality, very sick with fever and bloody flux was healed by Paul when he laid hands on him and because of that cure all the sick people on the island came to Paul and were also healed. Paul remained three months on this island before setting sail once again.

The ship on which Paul will go to Rome and there finish his ministry has wintered at this island. After about five days they came to the Port of Puteoli and here found certain brethren with whom they fellowshipped for a week, even though Paul is a prisoner. The brethren of Rome. Luke says, hearing of our coming, came as far as Appiiforum and the three taverns to meet us and as soon as Paul caught sight of them he thanked God and took courage.

INVITES JEWS TO HEAR TRUTH

We close our account with the final chapter of the Book of Acts. Timewise we are somewhere around 63 A.D. When Paul lands in Rome, the scripture says all the other prisoners were delivered to the captain of the guard but Paul was granted permission to dwell by himself with only a soldier that kept him! Three days after arriving in Rome, Paul calls a meeting of the leading men of the Jews to come

see him. He has invited the head men of the Jewish colony of Rome to visit with him, Acts 28:17-24. We want to examine this closely because here we are going to see Paul quote another prophecy pertaining to the Jews. Recall he already quoted Hab. 1:5 to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia!

JEWS REJECT FINAL CALL

Paul begins by saying he has done nothing against the Jewish people or the customs of the fathers. Yet in Jerusalem. Paul says, I was turned over to the Romans as a prisoner.. After examining me the Romans wanted to set me free because I was innocent of any crime that deserved the death penalty. The Jews objected, therefore, I was forced to appeal to Caesar. Now it is for this reason I have invited you to come to speak with you, for it is on the account of Israel's hope (for the Messiah) that I am wearing this chain. Isn't it interesting to note Rome chained Paul's ankles but not his tongue!! However, several years later they will do that also! The Jews answered Paul, we have not received any letters from Judaea concerning you, nor has any of our Jewish brethren reported or stated anything wicked about you. Therefore we think it fitting for you to tell us what you think or what your views are for as to this sect, it is known by all of us that it is everywhere denounced or spoken against! They set a day and came in large numbers to see him at the place where he lodged and from morning until night Paul continued to explain to them the kingdom of God. At the same time giving them his own testimony

and trying from the law of Moses and the prophets to convince them about Jesus. But it did very little good! People who think they have stayed in service a long time should have been there!! Some believed these things spoken and some believed not. This lets me know there were two different reactions concerning the gospel there in Rome. Remember since before 60 A.D. Paul has already had his revelation concerning blindness in part happening to Israel, Rev. 11:25-26.

PROPHECY GIVEN

As Paul watched them, he saw some agreeing and some shaking their heads in disagreement. Before they left Paul let them have one more prophecy. Isa. 6:9-10. Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers saying, Go unto this people, and say. Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross. and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with their eyes. and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them!

GOSPEL GOING TO GENTILES HERE IT IS!

Watch what Paul tells the Jews—it is all over for them! Hear Paul as he says, be it known therefore unto you that this salvation is (note) sent unto the gentiles and that they will hear it! Acts 28:25-28. I want you to note how once

again Paul has taken a rebuking Old Testament prophecy and applied it to the Jews in dispersion. Rebuking the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia Paul used Habbakuk 1:5; However in Rome he used the prophecy of Isaiah—Go to this people—who was to go to this people? Paul was the man to go and the people to go unto was the Jews in dispersion and say what is recorded in Acts 28:25-27. The last chapter of Acts leaves the question of Paul's release unanswered along with what all he did until around 67 A.D. when he was beheaded on Nero's chop block. Tradition says he visited other places but the point is, whatever Paul did was not important enough that the Holy Spirit saw necessary—to-record it in the line chapter of Acts. The book is primarily interested in showing the Jews being totally cut off from the gospel of grace and secondly showing the gospel is now reaching the gentiles. Because as the last two verses of Acts 28 implies Paul lived for two whole years in Rome in his own rented house and received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus with all confidence, no man forbidding him. Timewise that brings us into 65 A.D.

The Book ends with the gospel going to the gentiles and Paul says, they will hear it.

FINAL DAYS AT JERUSALEM

Take a quick look at Jerusalem as Israel is blinded completely to the truth of the gospel as it goes strictly to the gentiles from 65.70 A.D. And we

know for some 1900 years the gospel has worked among the gentiles. Bloody civil war from 65-70 A.D. has erupted in Jerusalem between three leading religious factions of old Judaism—Zealots, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Multitudes of innocent Jews are slaughtered as the three leading factions fight for the possession to place their candidate of the party in the office of high priest. From 65-70 A.D. one high priest after the other is slaughtered by the other groups. A civil war having erupted in Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin sought Roman governmental aid from the Roman governor to suppress these social party uprisings. 30,000 men were dispatched, where in the autumn of 66 A.D. the Roman troops entering Jerusalem were defeated and the civil religious uprising continued until 70 A.D. when the Emperor Nero, answering the call from the Roman governor over the Palestinean area sent Vespasian and Titus to Jerusalem with 60,000 troops. The crazed Jews having beat off 30,000 several years earlier, decided to take on the 60,000 along with their latest bombardment equipment. The Roman Army crossing Galilee crushed every opposing force, marched to Jerusalem and in 70 A.D., not only burned and destroyed the city along with the temple area but took every Jew other than the old and cripple back to Rome where they were sold as slaves at public auction unto gentiles throughout the world! Yes, in 70 A.D. the Roman Army struck the death blow to the Jewish nation!!

From the hour Jesus entered his ministry after his baptism by John

Paul, visiting the churches in Europe, remains three months in Greece and now has a desire to go to Jerusalem. He wants to be there if possible by Pentecost. Remember, many thousands of Jews will always be in Jerusalem on any pentecost feast day but note this time Paul will face the angriest mob of Jews he has ever met! By now they have all no doubt heard him preach and have rebelled against his message. Now they are extremely bitter!

Until 70 A.D., a period of roughly 40 years, God had dealt mercifully with the Jewish nation. A revival broke out, first among the Jews at Jerusalem in 33 A.D. and later among the gentile nations, the likes of which were never repeated among the gentiles. The next mighty revival will not be among gentiles but will be when God again visits the Jews in their homeland through those two prophets, clothed in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah. How soon that revival is to be I do not know, but I will leave you with this thought to consider the gentiles, like the Jews before 70 A.D., are slowly being cut off. The minute that restoring prophet of the last church age had appeared and restored the true teachings of the apostles to the endtime believers and God had taken him off the scene, every devil spirit once ruling the life of the gentiles before the gospel of grace came to them, is now seen creeping back in as the convicting power of the Holy Spirit is being, lifted from the gentiles, ready to return to Israel to give her her great revival in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. For 1900 years the convicting power of the Holy Ghost restrained

these immoral spirits ruling the nature of the gentiles as shown in Romans 1. Now the unconverted gentiles cannot help but go back and pick up the nature of that old wild olive tree before God grafted him to his grace program.

Once God plucks that last gentile belonging to him, the gentiles also will receive their death stroke just as God gave to the Jew in 70 A.D. wherein God had dealt with them approximately 38-40 years. When this thing closes out for gentiles we will find that God has dealt with us for approximately the same period of time he dealt with Israel when he offered them an opportunity to accept the true gospel because as the scripture shows that period covers approx. one generation of duration in which God deals with a people after having presented unto them the true gospel.



The Contender is published 8 times a year (excluding the months of March, June, September and December) by Faith Assembly Church, P.O. 2368, Clarksville, Indiana 47131-2368, a non-profit corporation, and is mailed free to all who request it. Published at Corydon, Indiana.

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Contender

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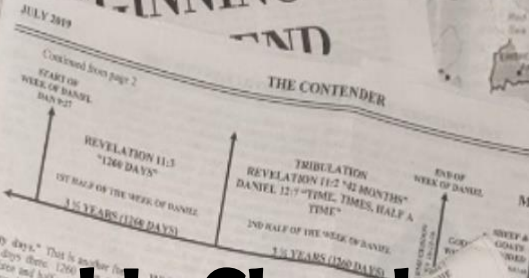
Printed Voice of Faith Assembly

MAY 2003

Vol 35 No. 4

FROM THE PART BEGINNING- 105

THE CONTENDER



Raymond Jackson

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END

QUESTIONS

THE LAST DAYS OF THE...

AND ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AT THIS POINT BEFORE...

CONTENDING ON 7/10/03

EVERYONE

I pray the Lord will enable us...

to stand firm in the face of...

the tribulation that is ahead...

of us. Let us not be discouraged...

but let us stand firm in the...

faith that we have in Jesus...

Christ our Lord and Savior...

and let us be ready for the...

coming of our Lord and...

Savior. Amen.

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the Word Bards
hath made herself ready

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FEBRUARY 2019

One hand...
...hath made herself ready...
...the Word Bards...
...hath made herself ready...

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Continued from page 1

holding it sideways and not recognizing me. He said, "Oh, you are Bro. Allen." He knew my name. He said, "I was there when you preached, Bro. Jackson. I was there in the church, for about four him seats back to it. They snuck in, him and not Billy Paul over and some others. They acted...?" It looks like the face as though they were part of the congregation and snuck in. Al and I said the Bro. Jackson's family had asked that the regular congregation get seats in the church before the visitors, because there were not enough seats for everyone. They asked to be part of the...

Raymond B. Jackson
Brother of the Faith Assembly Church
1980-1985

Second Temple

JULY 2018