**Christ's Two Stage Commissioning of Paul**

**PART ONE**

**Acts 26:16-20**, I see Christ's early, "now send", limited, Jews/Greeks, commissioning of Paul in Acts 9. In some cases, when we talk about Christ sending Paul we are talking about Christ’s order for Paul that He will later commission Paul to launch out on. For instance, the kings, and Gentiles in Acts 9:15.

These things are recorded in the Bible. It shouldn’t be a mystery anymore. It is not a matter of who finds these things or who brings them to our attention, It is simply a matter of believing the Bible and what God said in the Bible.

When you talk with someone that does not rightly divide, you find that they have no problem saying, “Well, gospel of God, gospel of Christ, gospel of the circumcision, they’re all the same because there is only one gospel in the Bible”. They have no problem ignoring the names that God gave to His various items, whether various gospels or various dispensings. But, we who distinguish between the dispensations and rightly divide, we should take note of the names that God gives to His dispensations. We shouldn’t be saying, “Oh, they are all the same.”

These are significant verses, and I don’t want to just reference or read the verses. People have misunderstood the verses for too long. People get tempted to just take a few words from a verse and plug it into a different context. So, I want for us to read the whole context to gain a full understanding, and I will point out the significant places. I see Christ’s early limited sending of Paul described in at least these four scripture passages:

**Acts 26, verses 16-20**

**Acts 22, verses 1-16,**

**Romans 1:16,**

**1st Corinthians 9, verses 16-18.**

Firstly, in: **Acts 26, verses 16-20**

**Acts 26:16**But rise, and stand upon thy feet:

for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose,

to make thee a minister and a witness

both of these things which **thou hast seen**,

and of those things in the which **I will appear unto thee**;

**17**  Delivering thee from

the people, and from the Gentiles,

unto whom **NOW I SEND THEE**,

**18**To open their eyes,

and to **turn** them from darkness **to light**,

and from the power of Satan **unto God**,

The gospel of God fits that description. The gospel of God that Paul preached was turning them from the darkness they were in, to the Light of the world. That gospel was changing their minds about who the Light of the world is. Who is the Light of the world? The gospel of God identifies who Jesus is, it labels Him, names Him. Believe in the name of the Son of God.

**18**To open their eyes,

and to **turn** them from darkness **to light**,

and from the power of Satan **unto God**,

**THAT THEY MAY**

**THAT THEY MAY**

Do you see that? There is a second part of the verse that is coming up next. The first part of the verse allows a person to take a step into the second part of the verse.

**THAT THEY MAY**

**receive forgiveness of sins**,

and **inheritance** among them which are sanctified

**by faith that is in me**.

The “gospel of Christ” fits that description. In the **“gospel of Christ”** you can see a gospel of salvation. They would receive **forgiveness** of sins, and **inheritance**. Their **faith is in** Christ Jesus.

**Acts 26:19**Whereupon, O king Agrippa,

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

**20**  But **shewed first** unto them of **Damascus**,

and at **Jerusalem**,

and throughout **all the coasts of Judaea**,

and THEN to the Gentiles,

that they should repent

Let us consider who are the “THEY” in “they should repent”? Paul said “first unto them of Damascus”.. Who did Paul preach to in Damascus?

**Acts 9:19**And when he had received meat,

he was strengthened.

Then was Saul certain days

with **the disciples** which were **at Damascus**.

**20**  And straightway he preached Christ

**in the synagogues,**

that he is the Son of God.

So, the “them” in Damascus were Jewish **disciples** in the synagogues..

**Acts 26, verse 20** continues after “Damascus”, with “and at Jerusalem”. Who was Paul with in Jerusalem?

**Acts 9:26**

And when Saul was come **to Jerusalem**,

he assayed to join himself to **the disciples**:

but they were all afraid of him,

and believed not that he was **a disciple**.

**27**  But Barnabas took him,

and brought him to **the apostles**,

and declared unto them how

he had seen the Lord in the way,

and that he had spoken to him,

and how he had preached boldly at Damascus

in the name of Jesus.

So, the “them” in Jerusalem were more Jewish **disciples** and Jewish **apostles**.

**Acts 26, verse 20** continues after “Jerusalem”, with “throughout all the coasts of **Judaea**”. Who was Paul with in Judaea?

**Acts 11:25**  Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus,

for to seek Saul:

**26**  And when he had found him,

he brought him **unto Antioch**.

And it came to pass, that a whole year

they assembled themselves with the church,

and **taught much people**.

And **the disciples** were **called Christians**

first in Antioch.

There was an apparent change, a change in their name. Like we said earlier, we right dividers make a difference when God makes a difference. When He gives it a different name, then we consider it differently. Don’t just say that they are all the same.

**27**  ¶And in these days came prophets

from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

**28**And there stood up one of them named Agabus,

and signified by the Spirit that there should be

great dearth throughout all the world:

which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

I think its interesting that Agabus shows up again later in Acts 21 with another prediction.

**29**  Then **the disciples**,

every man according to his ability,

determined to send relief

unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

**30**Which also they did,

and sent it to the elders

by the hands of Barnabas **and Saul**.

So, the “them” in all the coasts of Judaea were more **Jewish disciples**

Let us summarize who it was that Paul was referring to when he said in the first part of **Acts 26, verse 20,**

**Acts 26:20**  But **shewed first** unto them of **Damascus**,

***(Jewish disciples)***

and at **Jerusalem**,

***(Jewish disciples)***

and throughout **all the coasts of Judaea**,

***(Jewish disciples)***

After Paul testified that he went to the **Jew first** and also to the Greek, he goes further in the second part of **Acts 26, verse 20:**

**Acts 26:20**  … and then to the Gentiles ….

Jews are NOT Gentiles. Gentiles are NOT Jews. Paul was sent first to **the Jews** (along with Jew blessers), and then later that sending was extended to **the alien Gentiles**.

Check what the verse says again.

**Acts 26:20**  But **shewed first** unto them of **Damascus**,

and at **Jerusalem**,

and throughout **all the coasts of Judaea**,

*(the Jews)*

and **THEN** to the Gentiles,

*(the Gentiles)*

that **they** should repent,

and turn to God,

and do works meet for repentance.

Paul said that the Jews first and also the Gentiles should repent, meaning to change their mind like Paul had changed his mind about the true identity of Jesus Christ, that He is the **Christ**, the **risen** **Son** of the living God. Then Paul told the Jew, King Agrippa **(Acts 26:27)** that **he preached** for the Jews and later the Gentiles to do works meet for repentance.

Paul was reciting to King Agrippa what Christ had told him, and how he had followed that. People jump to conclusions there. They think that can’t be what Paul said, or he lied or something. But he is NOT saying how to be saved. He is NOT telling King Agrippa, “I gave these people the gospel of salvation, that they have to do works meet for repentance”. That is not what he said at all, is it? Paul did not say anywhere in that verse to do those things to be saved.

He was NOT talking about salvation. He was talking about **what he preached**, and Paul did mention the facts about the “gospel of God”. But he did NOT say that saves you. Paul did NOT say that he preached the “gospel of Christ” to those people. Notice that Paul did not say anywhere in that verse to do those things to be saved. Paul was NOT telling King Agrippa how he preached salvation. Paul WAS telling King Agrippa what he did after **Christ commissioned Paul**, having sent him:

“To open their eyes,

and to turn them from darkness to light,

and from the power of Satan unto God”….

That was all about the **gospel of God**, facts about **who Jesus is**, NOT about how to be saved. This description of the identity of Jesus is vague, not specific like the first four verses of Romans is. The first part of that verse is NOT talking about who Satan is, or about who Paul is. It is describing the Light of the world, Jesus.

“To open their eyes,

and to turn them from darkness to light,

and from the power of Satan unto God”….

It is more in the area of the “**gospel of God”.**

**PART TWO**

Christ separated Paul, and graced Paul to minister the “**gospel of God”**, so there could be a result. So that people could have a choice. Romans 15:16 tells us that the “gospel of God” sets them apart. People that have believed the “gospel of God” are set up. They are set apart to hear and believe the gospel of salvation.

 “that they may

receive **forgiveness** of sins,

There is a separation there. It is all in one sentence, but one leads to the other. The “gospel of God” leads them to be able to receive the gospel of salvation for forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, or set apart

**BY FAITH** THAT IS IN ME.

How were they to be “SET APART” to hear and to have faith in the gospel of salvation that Paul preached? That was the function of the “gospel of God”, to set them apart to hear and believe the gospel of salvation that Paul preached. Look at **Romans 15:16**.

**Romans 15:16**  That I should be

the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles,

ministering the gospel of God,

**THAT** the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable,

being **sanctified** ***(SET APART)*** by the Holy Ghost.

Paul did not say that they would be saved by the “gospel of God”. But it made them acceptable. Before the fall of Israel, and the salvation of Paul, Gentiles had to bless Israel in order to be acceptable to hear and believe the gospel of salvation in effect at that time. There is no test like that anymore. There is nothing about Israel that is involved with the body of Christ now.

that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable,

being **sanctified** ***(SET APART)*** by the Holy Ghost.

The function of the “gospel of God” is to set people up to **hear and believe** the gospel of salvation.

So, believing the “gospel of God” SET APART those Jews and Gentiles to hear and believe the gospel of salvation that Paul preached. They were not forced to believe it. They still had their free choice. So, it was the “gospel of God” that Paul indicated that he preached to the Jews first, and “**then to the Gentiles”** when he was talking to King Agrippa in **Acts 26:20**. That covers the first of the four passages about that show about Paul’s early limited sending in Acts 9.

I also see Christ’s early, “now send”, limited, “Jews/Greeks”, Acts 9, sending of Paul in **Acts 22, verse 1-16,** Paul had come to Jerusalem and James had suggested that Paul take a vow in the temple. Then some Jews from Asia made false accusations against Paul and tried to kill him. These verses were Paul’s defence.

**Acts 22:1**¶Men, brethren, and fathers,

hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

**2**  (And when they heard

that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them,

they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

**3**  ¶I am verily a man which am a Jew,

born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia,

yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel,

and taught according to

the perfect manner of the law of the fathers,

and was zealous toward God,

as ye all are this day.

**4**  And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding

and delivering into prisons both men and women.

**5**  As also the high priest doth bear me witness,

and all the estate of the elders:

from whom also I received letters unto the brethren,

and went to Damascus,

to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem,

for to be punished.

**6**  And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey,

and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon,

suddenly there shone from heaven

a great light round about me.

**7**  And I fell unto the ground,

and heard a voice saying unto me,

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

**8**  And I answered, Who art thou, Lord?

And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth,

whom thou persecutest.

**9**  And they that were with me saw indeed the light,

and were afraid;

but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

**10**  And I said, **WHAT SHALL I DO, LORD**?

And the Lord said unto me,

Arise, and go into Damascus;

and there it shall be told thee

of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

**11**  And when I could not see for the glory of that light,

being led by the hand of them that were with me,

I came into Damascus.

**12**  And one Ananias,

a devout man according to the law,

having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

**13**  Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me,

Brother Saul, receive thy sight.

And the same hour I looked up upon him.

**14**  And he said,

The God of our fathers hath chosen thee,

that thou shouldest

know his will,

and see that Just One,

So, Paul **DID** actually see Jesus, that Just One, not just a vision.

and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

**15**  For thou **SHALT** ***(future)*** be his witness unto all men

of what thou hast seen and heard.

**16**  And now why tarriest thou?

arise,

and be baptized,

and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Here is a single verse that shows that Paul was sent to announce the good news of what he had witnessed and the good news of who Jesus is. In this single verse, I also can see Christ’s early, “now send”, **limited**, “**Jews/Greeks**”, Acts 9, sending of Paul in:

**Romans 1:16,**

**Romans 1:16**

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:

for it is the power of God unto salvation

to every one that believeth;

**TO** the **Jew** first, and also to the **Greek**.

Where it says, “Every one that believeth” THAT IS CONDITIONED UPON

**“TO** the **Jew** first, and also to the **Greek**”.

**OTHERWISE**, God would not have inspired for it to be added.

And finally, I also see Christ’s early, “now send”, limited, “Jews/Greeks”, Acts 9, sending of Paul in **1st Corinthians 9, verse 16-18**, and then we will get into Christ’s later sending of Paul.

**1 Corinthians 9:16**For though I preach the gospel,

I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me;

yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

**17**  For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward:

but if against my will,

a "**dispensation of the gospel"** is committed unto me.

Paul was saying that Christ committed it to him to dispense that gospel. What gospel? The next verse specifies which gospel Christ had committed to Paul to dispense at that time.

**18**  What is my reward then?

Verily that, when I preach the gospel,

I may make the "**gospel of Christ"** without charge,

that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

You can actually see Christ’s early **sending** of Paul in **Acts 26:16-20,** and you can see Christ’s early **commissioning** of Paul in that early sending in **Acts 13:1-4**. You can actually see Paul writing about that early commission being a **dispensing** or testifying of the “gospel of Christ” “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” in **First Corinthians 9:16-18**, with **Romans 1:16** and in **Acts 14:3, 20:21**, and **Second Thessalonians 1:10**.

Those verses, and the “gospel of Christ” all had to do with Christ’s early sending of Paul, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Now, let’s look at Christ’s later sending of Paul in Acts. Later in Paul’s ministry, I can see Christ revealing to Paul about his later, wider, all-men, future sending of Paul. At that later time, Christ said "I **WILL** send thee", and it turned out to be the same saving message, in

**Acts 22, verse 17-21,**

**Acts 20, verse 24, and 32.**

It was to be in the future from when Christ told it to Paul. But it is NOT still in the future from us today. It happened later in Acts. We are not still waiting for it.

Christ’s later sending of Paul was with the same saving message, but with a different name to the gospel so it is identifiable, since it was to a much wider audience.

Paul learned Christ’s later revelation in the temple vision in **Acts 18:22**, but he is telling about it here in **Acts 22: 17-21.** Having in **Acts 18:22** learned of Christ’s future, all-men sending, Paul’s epistles that were written after **Acts 18:22** show hints that Paul knew that Christ would send him to the **“far off”** Gentiles in the near future (**Romans 1:5, 14-15, 3:22, 15:19, and Second Corinthians 5:19).**

**PART THREE**

When we read about Paul’s earlier sending, we read **Acts 22:1-16.** Here, we will pick up where we left off in **Acts 22, verse 17-21**. This will show us Christ’s later, wider, all-men, future sending of Paul with the same saving gospel content. These verses also describe what is called Christ’s temple vision to Paul.

**Acts 22:17**And it came to pass, that,

when I was come again to Jerusalem,

Notice that Paul is NOT still on the road to Damascus or in Damascus. This is telling us about another of Paul’s trips. In fact, this is probably NOT Paul’s first trip back to Jerusalem after Paul’s salvation experience.

**Acts 22:17**And it came to pass, that,

when I was come again to Jerusalem,

even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

**18**  And saw him saying unto me,

**Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem**:

for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

What would Paul be testifying to the Jews, or dispensing to the Jews about Jesus Christ, that the Jews would NOT TOLERATE?

Next, we see Paul backtalking the Lord. No back talk, Paul!

**19**  And I said,

Lord, they know that I imprisoned and

beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

**20**  And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed,

I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death,

and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

In other words, “I helped.”

**21**  And he said unto me,

Depart: for

**I WILL SEND thee** far hence unto the Gentiles.

Now this event happened at a later time. It is not at the time when Paul was going to Damascus to capture, imprison, and kill those believing that Jesus is the risen Messiah. At this later time, Christ said that it would be in the future from then, when He sends Paul “far hence” to the “far off” Gentiles.

Paul had to giddy-up out of town real quickly because the apostate Jews were not going to tolerate what Paul would have said that Jesus Christ had told him in that temple vision.

In another study, we will look through Paul’s five trips to Jerusalem. Paul’s Jerusalem visit when he had his temple vision would have to be the briefest visit that he made to Jerusalem. We can determine which trip in scripture was the briefest by far. For this study today, we will just go to the verse that is easily Paul’s briefest visit back to Jerusalem. It is in **Acts 18:22**. Paul had just come from Corinth where he named several people that he had water baptized. He was on a fast track to Jerusalem.

**Acts 18:22**  And when he had landed at Caesarea,

Caesarea is downhill toward the sea from Jerusalem.

And when he had landed at Caesarea,

and gone up,

He was climbing uphill to Jerusalem.

and **SALUTED THE CHURCH**,

he went down to Antioch.

After the temple vision he fled down hill toward Antioch. Just three words are dedicated to Paul’s visit in Jerusalem that time: “SALUTED THE CHURCH”. So, Christ’s temple vision to Paul was undoubtedly in **Acts 18:22**.

Paul learned a lot in that brief visit to the temple. It was right after that when Paul wrote in the first inspired epistle to Corinth in Acts 19 that “Christ sent me not to baptize”. We don’t have recorded what words Christ used to tell it to Paul, but that is when the change occurred. Paul came from Corinth in **Acts 18:18** and met with Christ in the temple in **Acts 18:22** and then, just afterward, he wrote to Corinth in Acts 19 that “Christ sent me not to baptize”.

In **Acts 22, verses 17 through 21**, we have read the conversation between Jesus Christ and Paul in the temple. In the verses that immediately follow that, we see a stark change in the Jews attitude. The Jews in Jerusalem had no problem with the Greeks being in the synagogues, blessing Israel with their tithes. But a verse later in **Acts 22, verse 22**, those same Jews exploded in anger against Paul for claiming that Jesus Christ had told him that he should preach the gospel of salvation to the alien Gentiles that had no respect for God, or for Israel, or for the covenants. They could not understand how God would save those that He had covenanted to curse in **Genesis 12:3.** It was a mystery, unprophesied to them

Also, in Acts 20:17, before Paul told of his Acts 18:22 temple vision in Acts 22:17-21, he called the Ephesian elders down from Ephesus to Miletus near to where his ship had docked. Paul made recorded statements in that Miletus meeting that show Christ revealing to Paul about his later, wider, “all men”, future, “I **WILL** send thee” sending of Paul with the same saving message, in”

**Acts 20, verse 24.**

**Acts 20:24**  But none of these things move me,

neither count I my life dear unto myself,

so that I might finish my course with joy,

Paul had a course. And he had been working on that course from Acts 9 through Acts 20 here when he stated this.

so that I might finish my course with joy,

**and**

Here is something different, something additional.

**and**

**the ministry,**

**which I have received** of the Lord Jesus,

to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul told them that he has received a ministry of the Lord Jesus. What do you do when you “testify” something? You tell it far and wide. You speak it out. You DISPENSE it. Before he revealed it in **Acts 20:24**, Paul had received of the Lord Jesus, the ministry to DISPENSE the gospel of the grace of God.

Also, a few verses later in that same Miletus meeting, I can see parts of an even later sending in:

**Acts 20:32**  And now, brethren,

I **COMMEND** you to God

*(I turn you over to God. I won’t be here anymore, but God will build you up with the word of his grace****)***,

I **COMMEND** you to God

and to the word of his grace,

“HIS GRACE”, **not** of HIS LAW, but His GRACE.

I **COMMEND** you to God

and to the word of his grace,

which is able to build you up,

and to give you an inheritance among

all them which are sanctified.

What word of His grace is able to “**BUILD YOU UP**”, and is able to **give you an INHERITANCE**? What word of His grace? Paul was committing the “**gospel of the grace of God**” to faithful men who would be able to teach others also. It was an application of Second Timothy 2, verse 2, the commission that Paul and we are under.

**2 Timothy 2:2**

And the things that thou hast **heard of me**

among many witnesses,

You can just see Paul applying this commission there in Miletus before he even wrote it down.

And the things that thou hast **heard of me**

among many witnesses,

the same **commit thou** to faithful men,

who shall be able to teach others also.

That process is exactly what Paul was doing. And, that is what Paul is placing it in THEIR hands to do. Those Ephesian elders were the becoming the faithful men to Paul. Paul was committing the gospel of the grace of God to faithful men who would go back and “teach others also” who also would become the faithful men in the next spiritual generation, developing others as these faithful men go back to Ephesus to apply **Acts 20:32.**

**Acts 20:32**  And now, brethren,

I commend you to God,

and to the word of his grace,

which is able to build you up,

and to give you an inheritance

among all them which are sanctified.

That process is the Bible’s only indication of where the Ephesians came from, that Paul later said he “heard of”.in **Ephesians 1:15** when writing his Ephesian epistle. You can look in Ephesians 1, verse 15 and you can see that Paul had to hear about the people that he wrote to in his Ephesian epistle. They are not the ones that “wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.”

You can see here in Acts 20 that Paul has a wider sending. He is NOT going back on that same circuit around the Mediterranean. He is to go far hence, on a wider circuit to Gentiles that are doctrinally “far off”.

We have been looking at the verses that point out Christ’s early sending of Paul, his “I NOW send thee” sending. After that, we looked at the verses that point out Christ’s later, second stage sending of Paul, this time not only to the Jews and Greeks first, but now to all people.

Christ’s earlier sending of Paul was not prophetic, not prophesied in scripture, but the mystery of the body of Christ was involved with the unprophesied side of some prophecies about Israel’s rejection of their Messiah. We will get to those: one is in Habakkuk and another is in Deuteronomy. To clarify, Paul is not in prophecy. The body of Christ is not in prophecy. The new man is not in prophecy. Prophecy is regarding Israel. The body of Christ is different from Israel, and apart from Israel.

**PART FOUR**

Having already seen Christ’s early sending of Paul, and His later promise of sending Paul, we now can see Paul **REPORTING** the time when Christ actually did send him to begin preaching to that wider, (all-men) audience in **Philippians 4, verse 15** and we will look at that soon. Up until now, we have talked about that later stage of Christ’s sendings of Paul beginning even later into the future because even then, Christ said “I WILL send thee”. Well here we are going to look at when Christ actually sent Paul, commissioning him with that ministry, to go dispense, or testify, the **“gospel of the grace of God”** to all men.

**Philippians 4, verse 15**, refers back to **Acts 20, verse 6** as being the time when Paul departed from Philippi Macedonia "in the beginning of the gospel". There is the time marker. It tells us when Christ commissioned Paul to begin dispensing the gospel of the grace of God. Let’s **look at** those verses **to see** what they show.

**Philippians 4:15**  Now ye Philippians know also,

that **IN THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL**,

when I **DEPARTED FROM MACEDONIA**,

no church communicated with me

as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

Before we read **Acts 20, verse 6**, let’s look at **Acts 16, verse 12** for clarification.

**Acts 16:12**And from thence to **Philippi,**

**which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia**,

and a colony:

We can see that Philippi is a chief city in Macedonia. Now, let’s read **Acts 20, verse 6** with that in mind.

**Acts 20:6**  And **we sailed away from Philippi**

after the days of unleavened bread,

and came unto them to Troas in five days;

where we abode seven days.

You can see that **Acts 20, verse 6** fulfills what Paul said in **Philippians 4, verse 15.**

**Philippians 4:15**  Now ye Philippians know also,

that **IN THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL**,

when I **DEPARTED FROM MACEDONIA ….**

That would be the same as saying “departed from Philippi Macedonia”.

Let me just comment on this since it has become obvious that this is not a "hybrid" of two philosophical positions. It is straight from the scriptures. We have done nothing but look at the scriptures, and ascertain what they are saying, and post them. Some of them have been overlooked or ignored by those who don't understand it, or by those who think they would loose something by believing those scriptures too.

Believing the scriptural report of both stages of Christ's sendings of Paul is the receiving of the facts of scripture, whether or not a person understands them yet. We need to believe the scripture, especially when we don’t understand it. If you only believe what you understand, then you are only believing yourself.

There are no contradictions or additions needed when the scriptures are all taken together and applied to the people groups to whom they were addressed. Don’t grab what is Israel’s doctrine and claim that it was written to you. You will just be disappointed in the end. God did NOT say it to you if He said it to Israel.

There are existing philosophies that see parts of the truth and try to supply theories to make the doctrines fit with their theory. But they all fall short of the scriptural truth that people can get just by believing the scriptures. Yes, you have to study. That is why we meet and fellowship. That is what we do. We study to find out what the scriptures are saying, not what we can build on top of it, or claim that it says..

Let’s look at some of those philosophies. The Acts 28 philosophy misses the start of the body of Christ in **Acts 9, verse 6** with the salvation of Paul into Christ's one body. So, the Acts 28 philosophy must relegate all of Paul's Acts period teachings as being only to Israel, not to us, the body of Christ.

The Acts 2 philosophy misses the start of the body of Christ by claiming it started with Christ's resurrection or crucifixion or the shedding of the Holy Ghost. In so doing, they must incorporate into the unique, mystery body of Christ the doctrines of Israel's last days (**Acts 2, verse 16-17**).

**Acts 2:16-17**  But this is that

which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall come to pass in the last days ….

The Mid-Acts understanding of the start of the body of Christ correctly places it in **Acts 9, verse 6** with the salvation of Paul as the first to be saved by Christ's new "**PATTERN**" of salvation as a person, unforgivable in Israel's doctrine.

**1 Timothy 1:15**This is a faithful saying,

and worthy of all acceptation,

Everybody should accept it.

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **SINNERS**;

Not lawkeepers.

Not the righteous.

Not goody-two-shoes.

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **SINNERS**;

of whom **I am chief**.

*(meaning “first” like in the next verse, first, chieftain, head of the line)*

**16**  Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy,

that in me first *(chief)*

“First” is the same word as “chief” in the previous verse. Christ is the Head of the body, but Paul was the head of the line, the “chief” being saved into the body of Christ. Paul was the first to be saved by Christ’s new pattern.

that in me first *(chief)* Jesus Christ

might shew forth all longsuffering,

for **a pattern**

**“FOR”** a pattern, NOT **“AS”** a pattern**.** The longsuffering is not the pattern. The longsuffering was **“FOR”** a pattern, Paul goes on to tell how to follow that pattern.

for **a pattern** to them which should

**hereafter BELIEVE ON HIM TO LIFE EVERLASTING**.

That is the pattern that Christ started with Paul. It is called the mystery of Christ. After Christ had ascended to heaven, He came back and saved Paul in an unexpected way that He had kept SECRET until that time. When Paul saw Jesus he had to be thinking that he should have been struck dead if that was truly Jesus having been resurrected. Paul had to be thinking, **“He was right, and I was wrong, and I should be dead now”**. Paul was trembling and astonished, but, he was still alive though.

That is our only hope of salvation today. We can’t be saved by abiding by laws, or by blessing Israel, or even by believing that Christ died for sins, was buried, and rose again. Paul said that salvation is not by just believing those facts to be true, but rather to “RECEIVE” Christ’s death for your sins as sufficient to save you instead of anything you might try to do for forgiveness.

It is important to believe Christ’s **two stage sending** of Paul because that is what ordered all those differences in Paul’s **earlier and later** ministries. There were big differences that you can see in Paul’s Acts period epistles, all of which do not even appear in Paul’s post Acts epistles. There were differences that Paul no longer taught after the Acts diminishing, and after the dispensing of the “**gospel of Christ”**. Those differences included teachings about: head coverings, eating food offered to idols, not destroying the weaker brother Jews among them, tongues to disbelieving Jews, keeping Christ’s last Passover feast, healings, etc.

Christ had Paul make all those differences for those former synagogue Jews who had recently converted to believe the “**gospel of God**”. Paul was commissioned to preach the “**gospel of Christ**” to those who newly believed the **“gospel of God”**. Those former synagogue Jews and Greeks that believe the **“gospel of Christ”** were newly in the body of Christ. In fact, that was how the body of Christ started before we alien Gentiles were even targeted with the preaching of the “**gospel of the grace of God”** to all men. None of those earlier accommodating teachings appear in Paul’s post-Acts epistles. All you find there is pure body of Christ doctrine.

During that earlier sending of Paul to dispense the “**gospel of Christ”** to the Jews first, God was doing something beyond merely offering salvation to all men. In God’s foreknowledge, He was rounding up individual Jews and Greeks who possibly had heard the “**gospel of circumcision**” but that hadn’t yet believed that Jesus was the risen Christ, and not a fake. So, Christ sent Paul to preach the “**gospel of God”,** and thenthe **“gospel of Christ”** to them without them having been repulsed by the distraction of pig eating, Sabbath ignoring Gentiles being saved into the body of Christ in front of them. Those ordinance-keeping Greeks would actually “provoke” Jews and other Greeks to believe the “**gospel of God”.** And, by the time of the Acts 20 writing of Romans, some of them would believe the “**gospel of Christ**” according to **Romans 11:11** (“**is** come”, in Acts 20)..

Also, God foreknew there were some Jews and Greeks that heard and believed Paul’s preaching of the “**gospel of God**” who would elect to believe the “**gospel of the uncircumcision**” to be saved by Paul’s new gospel of salvation according to **Romans 11:5-6** and **First Corinthians 7:17-20**. They would be a remnant out of Israel, but they believed Paul’s gospel for their salvation, instead of believing the facts of Israel’s covenants for their salvation. They were not a prophetic remnant like the little flock, but rather, they were a grace remnant according to the choice of grace.

Where the Mid-Acts understanding sometimes misses the complete truth is by equating the “**dispensation of the grace of God”** with the **body of Christ**, and by so doing, they are ignoring an earlier dispensing of the **“gospel of Christ”** to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

I don’t see a “**dispensation of the gospel”** as a dispensation within a dispensation. I see a dispensation of the gospel and the dispensation of the grace of God as being in a series, rather than being parallel to each other at the same time. The later **“dispensation of the grace of God”** sends the “**gospel of the grace of God**” to all people, including the Jews and the Greeks who alone had already been sent the “**gospel of Christ”** earlier in a **“dispensation of the gospel”** of Christ. God’s word calls the two dispensations by two different names, and so should we.

Paul referenced those **earliest members** of the body of Christ by saying that those saved during the later dispensation of the grace of God were **“fellowheirs and of THE SAME BODY … by the gospel.”** Paul called those in the body of Christ during the Acts period, “THE SAME BODY”. You cannot disregard a dispensation of the **“gospel of Christ”** without disregarding God’s will for the first members into the ONE, SAME, body of Christ.

**PART FIVE**

Let’s look at these verses.

**Habakkuk 1, verse 5** and

**Deuteronomy 32, verse 21.**

**Habakkuk 1:5**  Behold ye among the heathen,

and regard, and wonder marvellously:

for **I will work a work** in your days,

which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

Look at Paul’s application of that:

**Acts 13:41**

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish:

for I work a work in your days,

a work which ye shall in no wise believe,

though a man declare it unto you.

**Deuteronomy 32:21**

They have moved me to jealousy

with that which is not God;

Idols.

they have provoked me to anger with their vanities:

and I will move them to jealousy

with those which are **not a people**;

Biblical Greeks were not a people, they were seekers. **Romans 11, verse 11** says that the believing Gentiles, or Greeks provoke Israel to jealousy.

I will provoke them to anger with **a foolish nation**.

That foolish nation to them was the singular nation, of the little flock of believing Israel among their midst. Let’s see who else was involved there. First, looking in **Acts 14:1-2,** we will see four people groups. There were two groups of Gentiles, unbelieving and believing Gentiles, sometimes called Greeks or wisdom seekers. Also, there were two groups of Jews, unbelieving Jews, and believing Jews who were sometimes called kingdom believers or the little flock.

**Acts 14:1**And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews,

and so spake, that a great multitude

both of the **Jews** and also of the **Greeks** believed.

**2**  But the **unbelieving Jews** stirred up the **Gentiles**,

and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

So, in **Deuteronomy 32, verse 21**, who are those that are not a people, not the nations, not a nation, not Greek nationally? The only group that fit the description of “not a people” was the Greeks that provoked Israel to jealousy according to **Romans 11, verse 11**.

That Syro-Phenician woman was a Syro-Phenician by nationality according to **Mark 7:26**

**Mark 7:26**  The woman was a Greek,

a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him

that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

She was NOT a Greek by nationality. And yet Mark was inspired of God to call her a “GREEK”.

Trophimus was called a Greek in Acts 21, verses 28-29. The Jews accused Paul of taking a Greek, Trophimus into the temple. Trophimus, being a Greek, was not allowed in the temple. There in Acts, Luke was inspired of God to call Trophimus a Greek. His nationality was from Ephesus, but he was called a Greek. The Greeks were not a people.

**Deuteronomy 32:21** …

and I will move them to jealousy

with those which are **not a people….**

Those Greeks had a big part in “a work”, “I will work **A WORK** in your days”. That was the prophecy side of what Paul’s side was called **“a dispensation of the gospel”**

Paul was instrumental in fulfilling the unprophesied “**body of Christ”** side related to some of those prophecies. Paul did not leave the body of Christ to go preach on the prophetic side. It’s just that what Paul did provoked Israel to **“emulate”** or copy by believing that Jesus was the risen Christ. “Provoke” is one of the words used in those prophecies. Beyond that, the Greeks receiving Paul’s gospel would provoke Israel to **“jealousy”**. You know what jealousy is. “I want what they have”. The Greeks made some Jews want God’s salvation by faith in the **“gospel of Christ”.**

The later **“dispensation of the grace of God”** is similar, but not identical, to the **“body of Christ”**. The **“body of Christ”** is a group of saved believers. The **“dispensation of the grace of God”** is not a group of people. It is not a time period. The **“dispensation of the grace of God”** is the dispensing, or testifying of God's grace to all people. It proclaims that anyone who will receive forgiveness based only on Christ's death for their sins, His burial, and His resurrection, is saved. Notice that the dispensing, or testifying of the **“good news of the grace of God”** has NO RESTRICTION of being to the Jew first and also to the Greek, as the **“gospel of Christ”** had. That is what Paul was doing late in his ministry, after Christ’s later “I WILL SEND THEE” sending. Eighteen verses later, we read:

**Acts 20:24**  But none of these things move me,

neither count I my life dear unto myself,

so that I might finish my course with joy,

(and)

and the ministry,

which **I have received** of the Lord Jesus,

**TO TESTIFY** the gospel of the grace of God.

That was Christ's later sending of Paul, which came after Christ's earlier sending (commissioning) of Paul to the individual Jews and Greeks (in the synagogues). In Acts 7, the nation of Israel had fallen from receiving the immediate (at hand) kingdom out of heaven. But, there were individuals that God was still courting to believe the gospel that they had already heard. It was a prophetic thing. They had heard the gospel of the circumcision and hadn’t yet decided that Jesus was the risen Messiah. But that is only half the picture. There were others that would come as sinners to believe the gospel of Christ and be members of the formerly unrevealed, body of Christ. But we will look at the verses for the body of Christ side after we FIRST look at some of these verses for the prophetic side.

(**1st Corinthians 1, verse 12-13,**

**chapter 3, verse 5-9,**

**chapter 7, verse 17-20**).

**1 Corinthians 1:12**Now this I say,

that every one of you saith,

I am of Paul; and

I of Apollos; and

I of Cephas; and

I of Christ.

**13**  Is Christ divided?

was Paul crucified for you?

or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Let’s look through those four names. There is Paul. He has the mystery and rightly divides it from the prophetic writings to which he also has access.

Then consider Apollos, and Cephas, and Christ in His earthly ministry. They all three had a prophetic viewpoint, but they had differences. Apollos had only known the baptism of John. Christ only preached that the promised kingdom was at hand. Cephas, Peter actually preached that Christ would return with the kingdom if they believed. Cephas was actually offering the kingdom and they rejected it.

And then, there is Paul who is about the body of Christ. But, is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? They were making bigger differences than there actually were. They were indulging the old idea that Jews, by birth, are better than anyone else. It was like Peter’s initial attitude toward Cornelius. “**Get away from me, you Gentiles**”. That also shows up the need for the **saving gospel** to be dispensed to the Jews first, if any **individual Jews** were going to believe either the gospel of God, or the salvation gospel of Christ. They needed for the **alien Gentiles** to be somewhat **tamed** when meeting in Paul’s meetings with the believing Jews. That is apparently part of human nature. So, it probably shows up today too, in our attitudes.

The **body of Christ churches and members** were not to think of the Jerusalem church, and the churches of Judaea, with Peter, James, and John as being their enemies, or competitors, or somehow Satanic. They were both saved by Christ, or being saved by Christ as Israel had to endure to the end to be saved. Christ was still their Saviour though. They both believed that Christ had died for their sins even though they had different gospels of salvation, different word of truth **(Ephesians 1:13, James 1:18, 2:24).** Israel believed that Christ was the Lamb of God for them. The body of Christ believed that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification, saving those who believe that was sufficient.

**PART SIX**

There were those elements active in the Corinthian church of God that came out of the Jewish synagogue. Paul was addressing that contentious atmosphere. He was trying to draw them together. There was no sign like a halo over the ones that would believe the gospel of Christ. Paul just had to preach the gospel of God as if no one had heard anything about the gospel before **(Acts 17:2-3)**.

Look at these verses.

**1 Corinthians 3:5**¶Who then is Paul,

and who is Apollos,

but ministers by whom ye believed,

even **as the Lord gave to every man**?

Paul was talking to a widely mixed group there in Corinth. Some were believing Jews. Some were believing members of the body of Christ. This is the group that had come out of the synagogue because they believed that Jesus was the risen Messiah.

They had to come out and they met in Paul’s meeting in that house joined hard to the synagogue. There was no place else for the believing Jews to meet when they started believing that Jesus was their Messiah. They could not meet in the synagogue, they were not welcome, they were expelled according to **John 16:2.**

So, the believing Jews also met in Paul’s meeting. So, when Paul said, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom YE believed…. The “YE” is that mixed group. The Jews had believed by the ministry of Peter or Apollos that Jesus is the Messiah. Those who believed the gospel of God and Paul’s gospel of Christ were in the body of Christ by Paul’s ministry. So, Paul was still saying “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom YE believed….” The body of Christ members had believed Christ through Paul, and the believing Jews part of that group believed Christ through the circumcision teachers.

**1 Corinthians 3:5**¶Who then is Paul,

and who is Apollos,

but ministers by whom ye believed,

even **as the Lord gave to every man**?

**6**I have planted, Apollos watered;

but God gave the increase.

Without God giving the increase, there would not be anything.

**7**  So then neither is he that planteth any thing,

neither he that watereth;

but God that giveth the increase.

So, no matter which side, the body of Christ, or the circumcision, it is God that is doing it.

**8**  Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:

So there you see it again. The two groups were not competing. Peter is not Paul’s enemy. I am trying to expose what Paul has said here. He did not say that Peter and Paul preach the same doctrine and the same gospel. It does not say that.

**8**  Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:

and every man shall receive his own reward

according to his own labour.

**9**For **WE** are labourers together with God:

Paul was still talking to that mixed group. That was the “**WE**”, the ones that believed the circumcision gospel that Peter preached, and the ones that believed the uncircumcision gospel that Paul preached. So Paul said:

**9**For **WE** are labourers together with God:

**YE** are God's husbandry,

Do you know what husbandry is? The husbandry is the vine keepers.

Jesus said in John 15, verse 1, “I am the true **vine**, and my Father is the **husbandman**." And Jesus said in John 15, verse 5, "I am the **vine**, ye are the **branches**":

**9**... YE are God's husbandry,

That “YE” is the circumcision believers that came out of the synagogue and meet in Paul’s meeting.

**1 Corinthians 3:9**

For we are labourers together with God:

ye are God's husbandry,

**YE** are God's building.

That "YE" is the ones that are being built up together in First Corinthians 3, verses 9, to 14. Those verses are about building the body of Christ as a building. That refers to the body of Christ people in the same mixed group, Paul's meeting. After we read the building verses, we can see the fact of the two groups meeting together in First Corinthians 7, verses 17, through 20. But first, lets look at God’s building in First Corinthians 3, verses 9, through 14.

**1 Corinthians 3:9**

For we are labourers together with God:

ye are God's husbandry,

ye are God's **building**.

**10**According to the grace of God which is given unto me,

as a wise **masterbuilder**, I have laid the **foundation**,

and another **buildeth** thereon.

But let every man take heed how he **buildeth** thereupon.

**11**  For other **foundation** can no man lay than that is laid,

which is Jesus Christ.

**12**Now if any man **build** upon this **foundation**

gold, silver, precious stones,

wood, hay, stubble;

**13**  Every man's work shall be made manifest:

for the day shall declare it,

because it shall be revealed by fire;

and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

**14**  If any man's work abide

which he hath **built** thereupon,

he shall receive a reward.

We may be better able to see the mixed nature of Paul’s meetings in First Corinthians 7, verses 17, through 20.

**1 Corinthians 7:17**

¶But **as God hath distributed** to every man,

**as the Lord hath called** every one,

so **let him walk**.

And so ordain I in all churches.

The term “all churches” is appropriate here because, in his meetings at that time, Paul was talking to people from both Israel, and from the body of Christ. At that time, there were still some individuals coming to belief in the circumcision gospel. Israel’s national kingdom gospel was not offered again. Israel had fallen in Acts 7. They had left both their promise, and the offer of their at-hand kingdom.

But, God is going to keep His promise to Israel. **“They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.”** But until Christ returns they remain apostate. They are not believing that Jesus is the Messiah, the risen Christ. That is Israel nationally. Israel still had some individuals that God loved and was not going to discard. They would come to a belief individually that **Jesus is the risen Messiah**. But, it was only in that brief period in history that God was calling people into **two separate entities**, by two different doctrines and gospels, one of which was transitioning out while the circumcision gospel was diminishing, and the other was the new pattern of salvation transitioning in through the uncircumcision gospel by which sinner Paul was the chief, the first to be saved in Acts 9.

That is NOT the case today. Anyone who wants to get saved today, has to get saved Paul’s way, the way Paul was first to be saved, as a sinner. You have to consider yourself totally bankrupt, with no rights to access to God, and not able to supply anything to affect your salvation. That truly is a change of mind. That is how Paul was. Paul was unforgivable and unsavable in Israel’s covenants, commandments and doctrine. Think of yourself that way. If you keep working at your salvation, then you are working at being ineligible for the gospel of salvation as God gave it to us for today.

**Romans 4:5** But to him that worketh not,

but **believeth** on him that justifieth the ungodly,

his **faith** is counted for righteousness.

Do you want to be righteous before God? Work NOT, but believe!

**PART SEVEN**

Let’s finish these four verses that we had started. We will restart at First Corinthians 7, verse 17.

**1 Corinthians 7:17**

¶But **as God hath distributed** to every man,

**as the Lord hath called** every one,

so **let him walk**.

And so ordain I in all churches.

**18**  Is any man **called being circumcised**?

let him **not become** uncircumcised.

Is any **called in uncircumcision**?

let him **not be** circumcised.

There you see the two callings AT THAT TIME, circumcision, and uncircumcision. God was doing that for a short work then, but not now though.

**19**  Circumcision is nothing,

and uncircumcision is nothing,

but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Don’t forget to apply Romans 10:4 for every one that believes.

**Romans 10:4** For Christ is the end of

the law for righteousness

to every one that believeth.

**1 Corinthians 7:20**  Let **every man** abide

in **the same calling**

wherein **he was called**.

That did not negate **Romans 11, verse 5**. At that time, God was still calling out a remnant according to the choice (or election) of grace. The verse does NOT say, “a remnant according to the election of prophecy, or of the kingdom”. It says “a remnant according to the election of grace”.

Paul said “LET every man abide in the same calling”, not “Every man MUST abide in the same calling”. The word “LET” is a word of persmission, not an order. There were **some Jews** that were being **called by God** into the body of Christ **by Paul’s gospel** of Christ.

Let’s remember the context here. Paul was writing to promote the unity aspect in God’s people, among the Jews, and among the body of Christ members, and between both groups. Yes, they were separate groups, but both had the same Saviour.

Paul was NOT saying that it was impossible for Jews that were called in uncircumcision to believe Paul’s gospel to be saved. Paul was saying let’s be stable here. If God called you to be a believing Jew, don’t try to be something else.

But on the other side, there also was a remnant. “Remnant” is a Bible term that refers to a small group of believing Jews. Those Jews in Romans 11, verses 5 and 6 (remnant according to the election of grace), believed Paul’s gospel of salvation, the gospel leading into the body of Christ. They were a remnant according to the choice of grace, and if by grace, then it is no more of works. But the prophetic remnant was still zealous of the law in Acts 21, verse 20. So, according to the context that follows Romans 11, verse 5, that unique remnant was by the choice of grace, Paul’s gospel leading into the body of Christ. There was a crossover at that time, for those particular Jews that had been called in uncircumcision, to believe the gospel of the uncircumcision. There were former Jews that believed Paul’s gospel. We can see them in:

**Acts 14:1**  And it came to pass in Iconium, that they

went both together into the synagogue of the Jews,

and so spake, that a great multitude

both of the **Jews** and also of the Greeks **believed**.

**Romans 1:16**  For I am not ashamed of

the gospel of Christ:

for it is the power of God unto salvation

to every one that **believeth**;

to the **Jew** first, and also to the Greek.

After all of that settled down, and you get to Paul’s post-Acts epistles as it is today, there is only one calling, there is only one gospel. The way to be saved is only into the body of Christ. You cannot be saved into Israel anymore after Israel was blinded and cast away in Acts 28. The casting away of Israel in Acts 28 is an Israel event, NOT a body of Christ event. Those who try to make Acts 28 a body of Christ event and doctrine, have to add to the scriptures in order to do so.

**1 Corinthians 7:20**  Let **every man** abide

in **the same calling**

wherein **he was called**.

In addition to **that husbandry**, **that prophetic remnant**, God was calling out a remnant, **NOT** a prophetic remnant like the little flock, but a grace remnant according to the choice of (the election of) grace, which Paul had preached by then as “**THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST”** **TO** the **JEW FIRST** and also to the Greek. Later, Christ sent Paul with the same new "pattern" of salvation by grace, through faith, not of works, "but to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly...." Your part is to only believe that Christ sufficiently died for your sins, was buried, and rose again the third day.

The gospel of Christ is often ignored in the Mid-Acts understanding, it shouldn’t be, but it is. The gospel of Christ is mentioned eleven times in Paul’s epistles. The content, or salvation message is the same **IN** the “**gospel of Christ”** as it is **IN** the “**gospel of the grace of God”** to all men. Look at the Bible time line charts. Try to find the “gospel of Christ on them. You can find the gospel of the grace of God on them even though it is only mentioned one time in the whole Bible. You can’t find the gospel of Christ on hardly any of the Bible time line charts. It should be there. But for some reason they want all those additional, special, accommodating instructions to be to us also, instead of only to the Jews and Greeks that Christ sent Paul to early in his ministry in a dispensing of the gospel.

The audience was narrower at first, in the "**gospel of Christ**". It was available to all men, but it was only sent to the Jew first and also to the Greek. When Christ widened Paul's sending to all men, it was "the beginning of the gospel" (**Philippians 4, verse 15**) of "**the grace of God**" being dispensed to all men, to all people.

**Philippians 4:15**  Now ye Philippians know also,

that in **THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL**,

when I **departed from Macedonia**,

no church communicated with me

as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

Let’s look at **Philippians 4, verse 15**, again, more closely. That verse tells when the gospel began to be sent to all people.

**Philippians 4:15**  Now ye Philippians know also,

that in **THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL**,

when I **departed from Macedonia**,

I have personally heard some preachers who try to ignore this, claim that Paul is referring to the Macedonian call in Acts 16, when Paul went to Macedonia. It is NOT. Let me remind you that there is a difference between going to Macedonia, and departing from Macedonia. It is obvious that they are just grasping for straws. Simply believe only the scriptures and you will be on the right track. Speaking of train track, the “Acts Train Station (analogy)” is still out there on the “Topical Lessons” page#8.

So, we need to really find out where in scripture Paul was referring to when he said that when he departed from Macedonia was the **beginning of the gospel**. That shows to be in Acts 20, verse 6, and **eighteen verses** before Acts 20, verse 24, where Paul said:

**Acts 20:24**  But none of these things move me,

neither count I my life dear unto myself,

so that I might finish my **COURSE** with joy,

**AND**

the **MINISTRY**,

which **I have received** of the Lord Jesus,

to testify ***(or dispense)*** the gospel of the grace of God.

**Acts 20, verse 24** refers back **eighteen verses** to **Acts 20, verse 6** when Paul sailed away from Philippi Macedonia. Paul had received that ministry to testify or dispense the “gospel of the grace of God” **eighteen verses** earlier in:

**Acts 20:6**  And we **SAILED AWAY FROM PHILIPPI**

after the days of unleavened bread,

and came unto them to Troas in five days;

where we abode seven days.

That verse, **Acts 20, verse 6**, is the event that **Philippians 4, verse 15** is referring to as "**the beginning of the gospel**", the “gospel of the grace of God” to **ALL MEN**.

**Acts 20:6**  And we SAILED AWAY FROM PHILIPPI

after the days of unleavened bread,

and came unto them to Troas in five days;

where we abode seven days.

Paul had so much to preach when he arrived at Troas, his first stop after **the beginning of the gospel**, that HE PREACHED ALL NIGHT LONG. and **raised a dead man**, Eutychus, as a “**sign of an apostle**”, which was a proof from God of his credibility. They did not have any prophecies to look at, that would show that Paul was in line with the prophecies because it wasn’t prophesied, it was mystery, the mystery of Christ.