**Christ Progressively Commissioned Paul**

**(Abridged, Condensed, Digest)**

By Mike McGlathery

In **Acts 26:16-20**, I see Christ's early ("now send"), (His early,) limited (Jews/Greeks) (His early, limited,) sending (or commissioning) of Paul in Acts 9, (I see it) described in at least four scripture passages:

**Acts 26, verse 16-20**

**Acts 22, verse 1-16,**

**Romans 1:16,**

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

Firstly, in: **Acts 26, verse 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).

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).

**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

Wait a minute, 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?

(Galatians 1:22, and 1st Thessalonians 2:14, and Acts 8:1, and 9:31, and 10:37, and 11:1-2,29, and 12:1,6,19, and 21:10, and 28:21 and Romans 15:31,)

**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.

**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.

**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**, and then later that sending was extended to **the Gentiles**.

**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 he 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. 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

“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. Christ commissioned Paul to preach the gospel of God, so

 “that they may

receive

**forgiveness** of sins,

and **inheritance** among them which are

**sanctified** ***(set apart)*** by **faith** that is in me”.

How were they to be “SET APART” to hear and have faith in the gospel that Paul preached? That was the function of the gospel of God. 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.

So, believing the gospel of God SET APART those Jews and Gentiles to hear and believe the gospel of salvation that Paul preached. The gospel of God is what Paul indicated that he preached to the Jews and then to the Gentiles

I also see Christ’s early, “now send”, limited, “Jews/Greeks”, Acts 9, commissioning of Paul in:

**Acts 22, verse 1-16,**

**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,

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.

I also see Christ’s early, “now send”, limited, “Jews/Greeks”, Acts 9, commissioning 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.

And finally, I also see Christ’s early, “now send”, limited, “Jews/Greeks”, Acts 9, commissioning of Paul in:

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

**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.

**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.

Later in Acts, and later in Paul’s ministry, I see Christ revealing to Paul about his later, (later,) wider (all-men) (later, wider,) future (he said "I will send") sending of Paul with the same saving message, in

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

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

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

**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.

**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.

**21**  And he said unto me,

Depart: for

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

I also see Christ revealing to Paul about his later, wider, “all men”, future, “I will send” commission 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,

**and**

**the ministry,**

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

to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Also, I see it in:

**Acts 20:32**  And now, brethren,

I **COMMEND** you to God

***(I turn you over 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**? Paul was committing the gospel of salvation to faithful men who would be able to teach others also.

**2 Timothy 2:2**

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 is the Bible’s only indication of where the Ephesians came from, that Paul later “heard of”.in Ephesians 1:15.

And, I see Paul **reporting** that Christ actually sent him to begin preaching to that wider (all men) audience in **Philippians 4, verse 15**, which refers back to **Acts 20, verse 6** as being the time when Paul departed from Philippi Macedonia "in the beginning of the gospel". 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:

and we were in that city abiding certain days.

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.

That is not a "hybrid" of two philosophical positions. It is straight from the scriptures, some of which 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 the facts of scripture, whether or not a person understands them yet. 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.

There are existing philosophies that see parts of the truth and try to supply theories to make the doctrines fit. But they all fall short of the scriptural truth.

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,

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

of whom **I am chief**.***(first)***

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

that in me first ***(chief)*** Jesus Christ

might shew forth all longsuffering,

for **a pattern** to them which should

**hereafter believe on him to life everlasting**.

That is our only hope of salvation today, by believing that “Christ died for our (my) sins”, and rose again.

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.

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 so, ignoring an earlier dispensing of the gospel of Christ to the Jew first and also to the Greek. You cannot disregard a dispensation of the gospel of Christ without disregarding

**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.

**Deuteronomy 32:21**

They have moved me to jealousy

with that which is not God;

they have provoked me to anger with their vanities:

and I will move them to jealousy

with those which are not a people;

I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

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 elievers.

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 of God's grace to all that will receive forgiveness based only on Christ's death for their sins, and His resurrection.

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

(**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?

**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.

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

neither he that watereth;

but God that giveth the increase.

**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:

ye are God's husbandry,

ye are God's building.

**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.

**19**  Circumcision is nothing,

and uncircumcision is nothing,

but the keeping of the commandments of God.

**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 (election) of grace, which Paul had preached by then as **THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST** **TO** the **JEW FIRST** and also to the Greek.

Christ's earlier sending of Paul was with the same new "pattern" of salvation by grace, through faith, not by works, "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly...."

The gospel of Christ is often ignored in the Mid-Acts understanding, even though 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.

The audience is narrower at first, in the "**gospel of Christ**". When Christ widened Paul's commission (his 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 (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.

**Acts 20, verse 24** refers back 18 verses to **Acts 20, verse 6.** Look at **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,

**AND**

the **MINISTRY**,

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

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

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 his first stop after **the beginning of the gospel**, that HE PREACHED ALL NIGHT LONG. and **raised a dead man** as a “**sign of an apostle**”, which was a proof from God of his credibility.