

Panorama Bible Study
The Plan of the Ages, Study 10 (Continued)

THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE
 FROM PENTECOST TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

1. In last week's beginning study of Panorama Study 10, we looked at the conversion of **SAUL OF TARSUS**, who became known as the **APOSTLE PAUL to the GENTILES**, writer of **nearly two-thirds** of the **New Testament**. What a choice vessel for the Gospel Paul was!!! He was, irrefutably, the **GREATEST HUMAN VOICE** for the Gospel of Redemption who would ever live, having **established Christianity** in all the **MAIN CENTERS** of population of the then-known world! He lived at Tarsus (*in modern day Turkey and previous site of one of the 3 greatest academic centers of the world at that time*) but, as a Jew and Pharisee, he had been schooled in the **The Law of Moses** and the **Old Testament form of worship** by the great teacher of the **LAW** and "card-carrying" 😊 Pharisee member of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, **GAMALIEL**. Paul was **BRILLIANT** academically **AND** with regards to his knowledge of **THE LETTER OF THE LAW**. But remember, humanity **CANNOT** keep the **LETTER OF THE LAW**! Fallen mankind must be **TRANSFORMED**. Fallen mankind must have **THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW**, residing **WITHIN**, i.e., **CHRIST WITHIN**, "*shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST.*" (*Romans 5:5*) As Dr. Henry H. Halley stated, "More than any other, and apart from Jesus Christ Himself, Paul altered the course of human history." Remember, too, that before his conversion, **PAUL** persecuted this "heresy" called Christianity and was standing and watching the **stoning of STEPHEN**. The faithful, Holy Ghost-filled **STEPHEN**, as he stood before the council, had the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and began to share with the council how **SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE**. He eloquently **connected the OLD TESTAMENT scriptures** to show the council the **PURPOSE OF THE LAW** that the nation of Israel had been given and **how the OLD TESTAMENT WORSHIP** was to **LEAD** them to its **fulfillment** in their **MESSIAH**, who is **JESUS CHRIST**.

QUESTION: Do you think, after Paul was converted and **FILLED with the HOLY GHOST** following the laying on of hands and prayer of the believer, Ananias, that Paul thought back to that day of Stephen's stoning and Stephen's eloquent presentation of the scriptures in proving **Jesus** is the long-awaited **MESSIAH** of Israel?

ANSWER: _____

2. I've attached maps of **Paul's 3 Missionary Journeys** for us to understand the **SCOPE** and **MASSIVE** undertaking to spread the **GOSPEL of the LORD JESUS CHRIST** to the known world of that time. Keep in mind the modes of transportation during those times: Horse or mule, Walking, Boat. Now look at the **MILES Paul covered** to show people through the **OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES** that **Jesus is THE CHRIST, THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD**:

- (1) Paul's **FIRST** Missionary Journey, *Acts 13:1- Acts 14:28*, (Main Route through **CYPRUS** and **TURKEY**, see map)
Distance: **1400 miles!!!**
 - (2) Paul's **SECOND** Missionary Journey, *Acts 15:36- Acts 18:22*, (Main Route through **SYRIA**, **TURKEY**, **GREECE**, **JERUSALEM**, see map)
Distance: **2800 miles!!!**
 - (3) Paul's **THIRD** Missionary Journey, *Acts 18:23- Acts 21:16*, (Main Route through **TURKEY**, **GREECE**, **LEBANON**, **ISRAEL**, see map)
Distance: **2700 miles!!!**
 - (4) Paul's Journey to **ROME** to appeal to Caesar for the charges against him, *Acts 21:17- Acts 28:31*, (Main Route through **ISRAEL**, **LEBANON**, **TURKEY**, **CRETE**, **MALTA**, **SICILY**, **ITALY**, see map)
Distance: **2250 miles!!!**
3. As you look at the maps and compare them to the names of places in Acts, note that on the maps the **names in ALL CAPS** are **PROVINCES** or **TERRITORIES** or **COUNTRIES** and that the **cities/settlements** are **lower case** with a **beginning capital letter**. These cities are notated by **black dots** or **squares**.

I included these maps for us to try to understand the **FIRE of the HOLY GHOST** that was in **Paul**, **COMPELLING** him to **PRESENT THE GOSPEL**, even in the most hostile environments and the most distant of locations. He was a **MAN ON FIRE—HOLY FIRE!!!**

4. Acts 8 Before Saul's conversion and while he was still persecuting the church, God was using **PHILIP** to spread the **WORD in SAMARIA**. Most scholars believe this is the **same PHILIP** as the **DISCIPLE PHILIP** who asked Jesus to, *"Show us the Father."* (*John 14:8*) Look at what was happening when **PHILIP** preached **JESUS CHRIST** to those in **Samaria**:

*“And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the **MIRACLES** which he did. For **UNCLEAN SPIRITS**, crying with loud voice, **came out** of many that were **POSSESSED with them**: and many taken with **PALSIES**, and that were **LAME**, were **HEALED**. And there was great joy in that city.” (Acts 8:6-8)*

It is undeniable that **SUPERNATURAL** events were occurring when the **GOSPEL of JESUS CHRIST** was being preached by someone **FILLED with the HOLY GHOST**, as Philip was. It caught the attention of **SIMON the SORCERER**, a man engaged in the evil world of the occult, who, because of his association with demonic powers, had persuaded the people of Samaria that he, himself, was some great power of God. *(verse 10)*

5. In verse 12, the people of Samaria **BELIEVE** Philip...

*“concerning the kingdom of God, and the **Name of JESUS CHRIST**, they were **BAPTIZED**, both men and women. Then **SIMON himself BELIEVED** also: and when **he was BAPTIZED**, he continued with **PHILIP**, and wondered, beholding the **MIRACLES** and **SIGNS** which were done.”*

6. What happens next in the scriptures has been a problem in some theological circles because the above scripture tells us these people **BELIEVED in the Name of Jesus Christ** and **were WATER BAPTIZED**, which is done as a **profession of FAITH in CHRIST**. SOOOOO...doesn't that mean they **AUTOMATICALLY** had received the **HOLY GHOST** right then and there??? Let's read further...

*“Then **SIMON himself BELIEVED** also: and when **HE was BAPTIZED**, he continued with Philip, and **wondered, beholding** the **miracles** and **signs** which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that **Samaria had received the word of God**, they sent unto them **Peter and John**: Who, when they were come down, **PRAYED for them**, that **they might RECEIVE the HOLY GHOST**: (For as yet **HE was FALLEN upon NONE** of them: only **they were BAPTIZED in the NAME of the LORD JESUS**.) Then **LAI**D they **THEIR HANDS** on **THEM**, and **THEY RECEIVED the HOLY GHOST**. And when Simon **SAW** that through the **laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given**, he offered them **money**, Saying, **Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.**” (Acts 8:13-19)*

7. In this example and on another occasion in **Acts 19**, the receiving of the Holy Ghost was **not** instantaneous and was associated with the “laying on of hands.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the British evangelist of the 1800's who was known as "The Prince of Preachers," once stated that the church is full of "**FALSE CONVERTS.**" Perhaps, in looking at the above scripture, we can see that it is possible for a person to "**BELIEVE**" what they have been told about the Word of God and Jesus Christ, but still **NOT RECEIVE IT.** At Samaria, **Simon the Sorcerer** showed that, even though he **BELIEVED** and had been water-baptized, his **HEART was not right**, for he attempted to **BUY** what can **NEVER BE BOUGHT**, for it is **THE GIFT** of the **HOLY GHOST** (*Greek, Pneuma-BREATH of God*). The word "**GIFT**" means "**SACRIFICE!**" When we **RECEIVE the HOLY GHOST**, we are **SUBMITTING ourselves to God.** We are acknowledging that we **CANNOT ATTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS/HOLINESS.** In **RECEIVING the GIFT** or **SACRIFICE** the **HOLY GHOST** imparts to us, we are receiving **JESUS CHRIST'S WORK upon the CROSS** as the acceptable **SACRIFICE in our place** before our Father in Heaven and, in so doing, we **RECEIVE** what **ADAM LOST**—the **VERY BREATH OF GOD!** The relationship in the **ORIGINAL GARDEN OF EDEN** becomes **RESTORED** in the **GARDEN** of the **BELIEVER'S HEART** and, ultimately, at the **2nd Coming of Christ**, the "**New Heavens and New Earth**" will reflect **EDEN restored** to planet Earth, but with the **FIFTH PART ADDED**, i.e., **Earth will NEVER FALL AGAIN!!!**

8. Many signs and wonders are accompanying the preaching of the Gospel. In **Acts 9**, in the town of Joppa, Peter raises a dead woman, who is a disciple, by the name of Tabitha (*Dorcas*). Verse 42 states that **MANY BELIEVED** in the **Lord** because of this miracle.
9. **Acts 14** Paul's ministry broadens. In one moment, the pagan people attempt to make **Paul** the mythological Roman god **MERCURIUS** and **Barnabas** the mythological Roman god **JUPITER** because of the miraculous **HEALING of a CRIPPLED** man at Lystra. Paul and Barnabas reject the people's worship and point them to the **TRUE AND LIVING GOD** who healed the man. But shortly thereafter, **Jews** who had **REJECTED PAUL'S** preaching in Antioch and Iconium came and stirred up the people to **STONE PAUL**, who was **LEFT FOR DEAD** outside the city. As the disciples stood around Paul, **GOD RAISED** him from the dead, for his work was not finished. It is commonly thought by scholars that this was the time Paul later spoke about in **2 Corinthians 12:2** where he said he was **caught up into the THIRD HEAVEN** and heard unspeakable words that could not humanly be articulated.
10. **Acts 20** Paul preaches for a long time on the **3rd** floor of a building and a young man named **EUTYCHUS** falls asleep in the window. **Eutychus** falls to his **DEATH**, but Paul **EMBRACES him** and raises him from the dead.

11. Eventually, in God's design, Paul is brought before Roman rulers to testify against **FALSE CHARGES** brought against him by the **CHRIST REJECTING JEWS**. He is first brought before **Governor FELIX**, whose **JEWISH wife is DRUSILLA**, where he openly testifies about **JESUS**. Two years later, he is brought before **Governor FESTUS**. Governor Festus then brings Paul before **KING AGRIPPA** and his wife, **Bernice**. Paul uses the opportunity to **boldly testify** of the **HEAVENLY VISION** he had originally received many years before on the road to Damascus which brought about his conversion.
12. Paul makes his appeal to **ROME**, for he knows God has ordained for him to **PREACH THE GOSPEL THERE**. During the voyage, there is a shipwreck (*Acts 28*) and the passengers land on the Island of Melita (**MALTA**) where the **2-step VIPER** bites Paul as he is placing wood upon the fire. Paul, miraculously, shows no sign of the deadly poison and God uses the miracle to further the preaching of the Gospel on that island. Paul lays hands on the **father** of the **Governor PUBLIUS** and he is healed from *"fever and of a bloody flux."* Other islanders come and are healed of many diseases while Paul faithfully preaches **JESUS** to them.
13. Paul arrives in Rome and lives for 2 years in his own house...

"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." (Acts 28:31)

It is noteworthy that during **Paul's ministry** he spent **5 years in prison**, was **whipped 5 times**, was **beaten with rods 3 times**, survived a **stoning** and also survived a **shipwreck**. Held in the infamous **Mamertine Prison**, he was martyred by the Romans under the **lunatic rule of NERO**. The following are pictures of The Mamertine Prison wherein is now located a memorial to the Apostle Paul:





History tells us that when it was time for Paul to be taken to the “chopping block,” he **RAN** towards it. Ironically, **Nero committed suicide** about a month or so following the ordered execution of Paul. As Christians, may we never forget the price Paul paid to bring the Gospel to the Gentile world and to give us the majority of the New Testament. The precious head of **THE GREATEST PREACHER WHO EVER LIVED** rolled upon The Ostian Road just outside of Rome. He shall forever be the **MATCHLESS LOYAL SERVANT OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!!!**

14. In the Book of Romans, Paul writes to the **Roman Christians**. He eloquently explains the purpose of **THE LAW OF MOSES** in bringing us to **THE LAW OF FAITH**. (*Romans 3:20-31 VERY IMPORTANT PASSAGE!!!*) He states that **the LETTER of the LAW** is **POWERLESS** and only serves to **SHOW US SIN**, but the **SPIRIT of the LAW**, which is found **ONLY in Jesus Christ** and **His perfect sacrifice** on our behalf, brings **POWER over sin** and **GIVES US ETERNAL LIFE**. We have **BEGUN ETERNAL LIFE in THIS LIFE!!!** He further plainly shows us that **BEING A TRUE JEW** has **NOTHING** to do with **ETHNICITY!!!...**

*“For he is **NOT a JEW**, which is **one OUTWARDLY**; **NEITHER** is that **CIRCUMCISION**, which is **OUTWARD** in the **flesh**: But he **IS A JEW**, which is **ONE INWARDLY**; and **CIRCUMCISION** is that of the **HEART**, in the **SPIRIT**, and **NOT in the LETTER**; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”*
(Romans 2:28-29)

QUESTION: How does one become **CIRCUMCISED** in the **HEART**?

ANSWER: _____

15. Paul further points out the **POWER of GRACE**—that **Grace** is **NOT** just a “wink and a nod” by God to **OVERLOOK SIN...**

*“For **SIN** shall **NOT** have **DOMINION** over **YOU**: for ye are **NOT** under the **LAW**, but under **GRACE...**”* (Romans 6:14)

QUESTION: What is the above scripture telling us about **GRACE**?

ANSWER:

16. Paul explains how **THE LAW of MOSES** can **NO LONGER CONDEMN** the Christian:

*“There is therefore **NOW NO CONDEMNATION** to them which are **IN Christ Jesus**, who walk **NOT after the FLESH**, but **after the SPIRIT**. For the **LAW** of the **SPIRIT OF LIFE in Christ Jesus** hath made me **FREE** from the **LAW of SIN and DEATH**. For what the **LAW** could **NOT DO**, in that it was **WEAK** through the **FLESH**, God sending **His OWN Son** in the **LIKENESS of sinful flesh**, and **FOR SIN, CONDEMNED sin in the flesh**: That the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of the **LAW** might be **FULFILLED in us**, who walk **NOT after the flesh**, but **after the Spirit**. For they that are **after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh**; but they that are **after the Spirit the things of the Spirit**. For to be **CARNALLY MINDED is DEATH**; but to be **SPIRITUALLY MINDED is LIFE and PEACE**. Because the **CARNAL MIND is ENMITY against God**: for it is **NOT** subject to the **LAW of God**, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:1-7)*