

W462A_Finish_Work_of_Christ_31.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open book at the Wednesday dinner, our meeting, and we are still under the covering title of the finished work and tracing some of the steps in the scriptures that lead to that great goal. In our last study, we drew attention to the parable of the marriage of the King's son. The fact that those who were invited failed to respond. They had a second invitation. They still neglected and despised and attacked it. Their city was burned up, and then a message was sent to the byways and others who had never been, as it were, conscious of the call, were gathered in. Well, now we move from that to the acts of the apostles, and a question is asked in the first chapter. They come into the presence of the Lord and they said in verse seven, verse six, when they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel. And the answer was, Well, you just leave that to the Lord. There was no definite yes or no. You see. The parable said that it would be another invitation. And they were wondering, is this going to take place? Well, it did. Because on the day of Pentecost there were those who were gathered. And Peter stood up and said, This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel. And called them to repent. So there was still an opportunity, although they had rejected the invitation and they had rejected the Son of God.

[00:01:43] He had prayed on the cross for them, Father, forgive them. And that prayer was answered. So he added The first part of the Acts of the Apostles, We have the self-same people being spoken to. Now, I won't go into what Pentecost stands for and who it was that was addressed. We'll leave that for a special moment because our time is so fleeting. I want now to step through the acts of the apostles with you, with just this this thought that God broke the silence and intervened and carried on his purpose at three occasions where there is a specific saying that now he is sent. The word saint means that he has taken the initiative. He has sent a messenger. The messenger has brought whatever the message was. And that is the key to unlock the acts of the apostles. Merely taking out verses and trying to fit them to your circumstance or mine or the church or whatnot is all very well. But the book is a book as a whole, and this, I think, will be a valuable way of tracking out the purpose, which is our great concern. So without further ado, will you look at the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles? The day of Pentecost is over, and now he's speaking to the people. Verse 19, Repent Ye, therefore is calling again that call to repent and be converted that your sins may be

blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.

[00:03:20] So there it is. If they had repented the second coming of Christ, instead of being a future hope to us, would have already taken place. But of course, you know what happened. Well, then, after going over the question a bit further and warning them that God had said with regard to their attitude to this, he says, Moses, verse 22, truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, Him shall ye hear, and it shall come to pass. That if they do not, that they shall be destroyed from among the people. So that at the parting of the ways, this is a moment when either they believe and go on to their full blessing or they will drift to their present position. Because Israel today are in their blindness. They have no king, no prince, no priest, no sacrifice, just marking time and waiting. Now we get to the point where we get this word sent coming very pointedly. Verse 25, Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham and in thy seed shall all kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you First God, having raised up His Son, Jesus sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities unto you. First he said, Now we mustn't dwell on that because of the time.

[00:04:45] So will you come to the next movement that took place? The 13th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. And this says This introduces a new figure into the acts the Apostle Paul. And in the 13th chapter we read the first verse. Now, there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers as Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene and Manayan, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul. This is very parallel to the number of names which are given in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where they were all gathered together and they were waiting to see who was going to be appointed to take the place of Judas and Saul. Saul's thrown in at the end. He wasn't brought up with Herod the Tetrarch. He's just put there at the end. But you know what happens? And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul for the work Whereunto I have called it. This work is still in view that we've got in the back of our mind all the time. These men are now going to take their place in this work to which God is moving. Now we turn the page and we come to the statement that He makes when in the synagogue he was called upon to speak. And in verse 26, he says this men and brethren.

[00:06:06] Now Peter said, Men and brethren. But he said men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham. But he didn't say. And whosoever among you fearest God. Oh, no. Peter gives her evidence of what he would have said had there been one single Gentile on the day of Pentecost when he looked the centurion up and down and says, you know, it's a thing unlawful for a man that is a Jew to be found in the company of one of another nation. And yet people crowded our Pentecost with Gentiles in their imagination. But we'll give that a rest till we come to it presently. But now this is what Paul says. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham and whosoever among you fearest God to you. Is the word of this salvation sent. So he is a move. Here is the inclusion of the Gentile for the first time. For the first time. They are specifically pointed out as being an object of God's salvation. And until this they could become connected with Israel as proselytes. But that was making them as near as much like Jews as it was humanly possible. But not now. Now, at the end of this chapter or near the end. There are 46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said. It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you. But seeing it put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life. Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. So here's a turning point in the acts of the apostles.

[00:07:40] Up till now, the Jew was dominant. And there was only a tentative thought that the Gentile had a look in. Now, he says, this is said to whosoever among you fear his God and seeing that you count yourselves unworthy. We are turning to the Gentiles and you will discover from now on all goes to the synagogues, but is always the gentile element there and finally breaks with them. If you'll come to the 19th chapter. The 19th chapter. Verse nine. And when divers were hardened and believed not, but speak evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them and separated the disciples disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. That's the end of Paul's synagogue Witness. From now onwards, it was a private house or an upper room somewhere, but the synagogue was over. So here's another point you see. Chapter 19, Chapter 20. We shall leave for the next time, but we'll go to the 28th chapter. Now for the third reference to this important word that something has now been sent. The 28th chapter we find Paul has reached Rome and we pick up the story at verse 17 and we find that although writing to the Roman church, he said he longed to speak seek to see them. Yet when he did get around, the first ones that he saw were the leaders of the Jews, the chief of the Jews, and they appointed him a day. So it says in verse 23, and when they had

appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets from morning till evening.

[00:09:39] What, inasmuch as this didn't bring about a complete conviction. They argued and reasoned among themselves, he quoted for the first last time in Scripture, the words from Isaiah six, verse 26, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand and seeing ye shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes are they closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known, therefore, unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and that they will hear it. So there's the steps in the Acts of the Apostles. And to you first it was sent to you, the people of Israel. In the second case, it was the Israel and the Gentile together. In the last chapter, Israel goes out into their blindness and the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles. So we'll finish the last two verses. Oh, verse 29, when he had said these words, the Jews departed. Now, that's rather a tame translation. They didn't depart, they were dismissed. And this word is the used in the first chapter of Matthew when it speaks about putting away a wife, divorcing a wife.

[00:11:03] Is Israel dismissed? Divorced? He is Hosea, a woman segregated and kept. And God says to the man, Now you just keep yourself for her and she'll just keep herself for him and wait. So the children of Israel are like that to me. He said, No army, not my people, temporarily. So he says they were dismissed. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house. So we are back again in parallel with verse 23. He had his own lodging. Now it says and received all that came unto him. Up there he didn't receive all that came unto him. He simply had those who were chief of the Jews. And down here, he preached the Kingdom of God as he preached the kingdom of God up there. But there's no word Jesus. Notice the stress very strangely in verse 23. His subject was Jesus, and he got his text out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets because he was speaking to the people of Israel. But now he says he teaches those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. All is a definite move here. No Jesus here. This is the Lord the Christ. The emphasis and no reference to the Old Testament scriptures. Not because he didn't believe them, but because as we go along in this study, we shall find

that he has the prisoner of Jesus Christ declares that he had given to him by revelation the mystery which had never been made known, but was hid in God and now revealed.

[00:12:34] This is where God is intervening. And He is saying to you and me, even though he is rather failed, even though there seems to be a break in my purpose, I knew God never taken by surprise, and so were the first chapter of Paul's prison. Epistle says that we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, but it wasn't made known in any Old Testament scripture. It wasn't made known in the early epistles. It was not made known until this people were dismissed and sent into their blindness. And the evil one looked as he put a spoke in the wheel of God, which he hadn't. And so God makes, as it were, the marvelous revelation of overwhelming grace to us Gentiles hinge upon, apparently, the defection of his people. And so it's got the last word here with all confidence. No man forbidding him. I'd like you to get one reference from the acts of the apostles where that very word forbidding comes. Acts ten. I referred in passing to Peter and Cornelius. Well, Cornelius has been spoken to and verse 44 says, While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them, which were heard the word and they of the circumcision which believed were astonished. Of course that's Israel as many as came with Peter because of the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

[00:14:01] Would you think would you think of any intelligent person, even who wasn't a Christian, could read those words and then say that there were any amount of Gentiles at the day of Pentecost? Well, these people didn't know about it. Apparently. They didn't know. They were staggered to think that even one Gentile should have had this gift which had been given at the beginning, for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid? There it is. Now, you see, why should he say, can any man forbid water if it wouldn't have been the normal thing to have done so? And this same word is found in one Thessalonians two when it says Israel filled up their sins, always forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles. Don't you think you and I have got to do a little revision of our attitude to the Word of God and not allow our hymnbook or our preachers to tell us what God means, but let the Word of God speak to us. And if it upsets our theology, so much, the better for us because we want what God intends. And we don't want to be merely blinded by tradition or by the opinions of others. Don't take it from me, friends do. This is the chapel of the opened book. We only try our utmost to let the book speak, but we don't try to make up your

mind for you. That's your responsibility as to the Lord. But do be bereans. Search and see if these things are so.