

Father in Heaven whom we give all thanks and praise to for the wondrous things that we have in our lives we are here again together in your presence. Though we may not see you, we have faith in knowing you are there and that we are able to pray to you. Please be with us now in our moment of study together and keep our eyes and ears always open to you and your word Lord. Amen.

The Cart Before The Horse

Acts 13 and Acts 28; what falls between

There are those who call themselves Acts 28 believers and yet there are many who call themselves Acts 13 believers. The Acts 13 believers are of the understanding that in chapter 13 the message of the mystery was given unto the Gentiles. This is their Turning Point in the New Testament. The Acts 28 believers harbor the same belief for chapter 28 and this is their turning point in the New Testament. For a while I didn't really understand the difference until I specifically addressed both chapters in comparison. I had not studied chapters 14 through 27, rather I focused on chapters 13 and 28 initially for my understanding. Initially both chapters appear to have the same relative sentiment or message. In reading the two chapters several times over one can start to recognize the difference in the two verses.

Acts 13:38 (KJV) Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

Acts 13:39 (KJV) And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Acts 13:40 (KJV) Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

Acts 13:41 (KJV) 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.

Acts 13:42 (KJV) And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Acts 13:43 (KJV) Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

Acts 13:44 (KJV) And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Acts 13:45 (KJV) But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Acts 28:24 (KJV) And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Acts 28:25 (KJV) And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

Acts 28:26 (KJV) Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

Acts 28:27 (KJV) For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Acts 28:28 (KJV) Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

First point, Acts 13:42 speaks of the Gentiles seeking to hear the message the following sabbath. Acts 28:28 states that the message will be sent to the Gentiles. The point I will make here is that Acts 13 does not have a proverbial exclamation point to it indicating finality of a point. Acts 28 has a point of stern finality and is expressed in verse 28. But if this is not enough then let us visit the interposed chapters between 13 and 28.

Acts 14:1 (KJV) 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.

Acts 14:2 (KJV) But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

As we see in the first two verses of chapter 14 in Acts the Jews were at the forefront and directing the Gentiles who are grafted in as believers such as the Jews believe at this time. This is just but one point which follows immediately after Acts chapter 13 that is indicative of the fact that acts 13 is not the final measure where the message of the mystery is given unto the Gentiles and the Jews are placed in abeyance.

Acts 14:26 (KJV) And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

Acts 14:27 (KJV) And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Acts 15:19 (KJV) Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

Acts 15:20 (KJV) But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

Acts 15:21 (KJV) For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

At this point the mystery is still held from full disclosure to all Gentiles.

Acts 17:1 (KJV) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

Acts 17:2 (KJV) And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Acts 17:3 (KJV) Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Now we see here as of Acts 17:3 Paul is still ministering to the Jews. This does not speak to the final turn nor does it speak of Paul being the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Acts 17:17 (KJV) Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

Acts 18:1 (KJV) After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

Acts 18:2 (KJV) And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

Acts 18:3 (KJV) And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

Acts 18:4 (KJV) And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Acts 18:5 (KJV) And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*.

It appears here in Acts 18 that Paul is still reasoning with the Jews as well as the Greeks. The message is indeed being imparted to some Gentiles but also the Jews. Therefore at this point there's no specificity to Paul's charge to be the Apostle to the Gentiles as of yet.

Acts 18:19 (KJV) And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

Acts 18:24 (KJV) And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Acts 18:25 (KJV) This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

Acts 18:26 (KJV) And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Acts 18:27 (KJV) And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

Acts 18:28 (KJV) For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

Paul was still sending the message to the Jews but this time through Apollos.

Acts 19:8 (KJV) And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:9 (KJV) But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:10 (KJV) And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 20:20 (KJV) *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

Acts 20:21 (KJV) Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 22:11 (KJV) 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.

Acts 22:12 (KJV) And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,

Acts 22:13 (KJV) Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

Acts 22:14 (KJV) 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.

Acts 22:15 (KJV) For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

Acts 22:16 (KJV) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Acts 22:17 (KJV) 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;

Acts 22:18 (KJV) And saw him saying unto me, *Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.*

Acts 22:19 (KJV) And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

Acts 22:20 (KJV) 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.

Acts 22:21 (KJV) And he said unto me, *Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

Acts 22:21 has specificity to it as far as chronological order is concerned that comes after Acts chapter 13. This is a crucial verse regarding putting the cart before the horse.

The events that are written of starting in Acts 22:19 and running up to Acts 28:28 are of a harrowing experience for Paul. Again in looking at these chapters and scriptures you find that they are indicative of a chronological order that places great emphasis on the absolute statement made in verse 28 of Acts chapter 28. This is indeed the exclamation point for the message and to whom it shall be directed.

Acts 26:15 (KJV) And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

Acts 26:16 (KJV) 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;

Acts 26:17 (KJV) Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

Acts 26:18 (KJV) To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Whereas the event regarding Paul's passage on the road to Damascus is chronicled in chapter 9 of Acts, the verses 15-18 from chapter 26 do not speak of a message to the gentiles specifically as Paul recounts the experience to king Agrippa. This is following a tumultuous exchange with the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and a vigilante mob of fasting Jews (These Jews swore a curse that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul). Then Paul was shuttled around to various locations to have audience with Felix the governor and then king Agrippa.

Paul knew scripture and what was said of Esaias regarding the understanding of the Jews.

Isaiah 6:9 (KJV) And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Isaiah 6:10 (KJV) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Acts 28:25 (KJV) And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

Acts 28:26 (KJV) Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

Acts 28:27 (KJV) For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Acts 28:28 (KJV) Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

Just as a point of reference the elapsed time between acts 13 and acts 28 is roughly 14-15 years thereabouts. Acts 13 occurred in about 47 to 48 A.D and Acts 28 was roughly 62 to 63 A.D.

At this point I would hope that it is clear where the turning point is and why it is finality for this particular subject. Is simply doing a comparison between chapter 13 and chapter

28 to determine the differences in the message then it seems to me that the clear path would be to fully take into consideration that which transpires within the chapters between chapter 13 and 28. As I and others have said numerous times This way of discernment is utilizing the tool spoken of in 2nd Timothy 2:15, rightly dividing! Acts chapter 13 alludes to what is to come and as a precursor to a very important event. Acts chapter 28 is the exclamation point, where the event of absolute direction of the message to gentiles is put forth.

Psalm 117:1 (KJV) O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

Psalm 117:2 (KJV) For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

Lord I pray that this study was found by those listening to be edifying and to be of a source for when there needs to be an answer. It is with our understanding of your words in this book of love that we prepare ourselves for those things that may come before us and have cause to stumble. We all want to be faithful in your word and ministrations, to shield ourselves from deception. In all that is, we give thanks to you Lord and for that which you have sacrificed of your son. In Christ's name, Amen.