

There is only one man in the New Testament declared to be the Apostle to the Nations or Gentiles and that is the Apostle Paul. In this survey of Paul's ministries we are not remotely suggesting that Paul is above His Lord, cp 1Cor.1:13, rather we are showing the importance of Paul and the stark differences in his ministries.

During the Acts period Paul preached to the Jew first then the Gentiles and our recent lessons have shown from Scripture that the inclusion of the Gentiles during the Acts period was;

1. Anticipated historically.
2. Foretold by the Prophets.
3. Secondary to his ministry to Israel.
4. Initiated after the rejection of the message by the Jews in specific locations.

None of these dispensational features exist in Paul's post Acts letters of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2Timothy, Titus and Philemon. We Gentiles are not saved today because of the four things above.

The inclusion of the Gentile during the Acts period was not a proclamation of a change of dispensation but a method used by God to provoke Israel to repentance and consequently receive the blessings promised for her. This is a critical truth unknown in Christianity and some dispensational circles and is the focus of this lesson.

Let us revisit the first recorded miracle through Paul when a Jew, resisting the message, was partially blinded;

[Act 13:11](#) And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is on you. And you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a while. And immediately a mist and a darkness fell on him, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

[Act 13:12](#) Then, seeing the thing happening, the proconsul (Gentile) believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Like Bar-jesus and Paul before him, the Nation of Israel had been withstanding the message; was unfaithful. Paul was partially blinded as an act of mercy and at Acts 13 Elymas suffers the same fate. Elymas is picture of the Nation from that point onwards in the Acts administration. Bar-jesus was stumbling around, so was the Nation, did this mean they were cut off or God had changed His mind and introduced something new? No! Remember these passages?

[Rom.3:3-4a](#) What if some of them (the Jews) were unfaithful? Their unfaithfulness cannot cancel God's faithfulness, can it? Of course not! (ISV)

The fact that Israel was unfaithful did not mean God would be unfaithful to all His promises made to their fathers. God was not going to introduce something new because Israel was not responding. God's patience with Israel had not expired with the Apple of His Eye at Acts 13 or at the writing of Romans see Roms.11:1-2.

Notice carefully in Acts 13:12 that when a Jew is partially blinded a Gentile is saved and this is understood in the context of the Jew "seeking some to lead him by the hand". The Gentile Proconsul believed as a result of the Lord's mighty hand on this Jew.

Let us see if the Word maintains this theme, that is, that the Gentiles were saved during the Acts period because Israel was stumbling and Gentiles were saved to "lead them by the hand". We might ask where this leading was directed and this too will become perfectly clear as we search and see.

Staying in Paul's Acts period letter to the Romans we find these statements:

[Rom 11:8](#) As it is written, "To this day God has given them a spirit of deep sleep. Their eyes do not see, and their ears do not hear."

[Rom 11:11](#) And so I ask, "They have not stumbled so as to fall, have they?" Of course not! On the contrary, because of their stumbling, salvation has come to the gentiles to make the Jews jealous.

[Rom 11:12](#) Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their fall means riches for the gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

Notice the same theme here as Acts 13, the Jews were partially blinded, stumbling and because of this Gentiles were being saved to make the Jews envious. The "leading by the hand" must be considered in Paul's words "their (Israel's) full inclusion". Now does this mean the Gentiles were leading Israel into the church which is His Body? Not at all, please read Romans 11:15-16 and 24-27 where Paul says that it is easy for God to graft repentant Israelites back into the Olive tree which is not the Church which is his Body. The salvation in view in Romans 11 was Christ in Zion, the same gospel Paul preached in Acts 13:32-35, see Psalm 2:6-7.

Gentiles were included in salvation during the Acts period because of the 4 things listed earlier in this lesson but now we can add 2 new reasons:

5. Gentiles were included because Israel was partially blinded and stumbling.
6. Gentiles were included to make Israel envious so that Israel might respond to the gospel; turn back to their God who would then turn back to them in faithfulness to all His promises.

Gentiles were not saved to lead Israel by the hand into the church which is His Body which was not revealed until after Acts 28. No, Gentiles were saved to "lead Israel by the hand" through provocation to envy unto repentance and their blessing. The blessing in view was the "promises made to the fathers" and this position is strongly supported when we remember Paul's words in the Acts period letter to the Galatians 3:8, 29 and here:

[Gal 3:9](#) So then those of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

But the Word of God provides even more resounding evidence. Let us revisit the Scripture James uses when he confirms the salvation of a Gentile (Cornelius) as being according to God's revealed purposes:

[Act 15:14](#) Even as Simon has declared how God at the first visited the nations to take out of them a people for His name.

[Act 15:15](#) And the words of the Prophets agree to this; as it is written,

[Act 15:16](#) "After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen down; and I will build again its ruins, and I will set it up,

[Act 15:17](#) so those men who are left might seek after the Lord, and all the nations on whom My name has been called, says the Lord, who does all these things."

This is a quote from Amos 9:11-12 where the prophet says Gentiles would be the called of the Lord (cp Roms.9:23-24).

But Amos includes Gentiles in the passage which speaks also of Israel's restoration:

[Amo 9:13](#) Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that the plowman and the reaper shall draw near, the treader of grapes, and he who draws along the seed. And the mountains will drip must, and all the hills will be dissolved.

[Amo 9:14](#) And I will turn back the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall build the cities which are desolate, and they shall live in them. And they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine. They shall also make gardens and eat their fruit.

[Amo 9:15](#) And I will plant them on their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, says Jehovah your God.

We cannot begin to suggest that Gentiles were saved during Acts to "lead Israel by the hand" into the Church which is his Body in the light of these passages. Scripture says Gentiles were saved to provoke Israel so that their full restoration would come in.

Let us turn to our apostle for another conclusive passage that he uses as his authority to turn to the Gentiles;

[Act 13:46](#) But speaking boldly, Paul and Barnabas said, It was necessary for the Word of God to be spoken to you first. But since indeed you put it far from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the nations.

[Act 13:47](#) For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have set You to be a light of the nations, for salvation to the end of the earth."

This quote is from Isaiah 49:6 and we include an exciting portion of that chapter which is clearly about the restoration of Israel. As you read this passage you might like to consider Gal.1:15.

[Isa 49:5](#) And now, says Jehovah who formed Me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel is not gathered, yet I shall be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, and My God shall be My strength.

[Isa 49:6](#) And He said, It is but a little thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You for a light to the nations, to be My salvation to the end of the earth.

[Isa 49:7](#) So says Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation hates, the servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, rulers also shall worship, because of Jehovah who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose You.

Paul's authority to turn to the gentiles during the Acts period was directly from a prophecy about the restoration of Israel. Gentiles were not saved during Acts to lead Israel into the Body of Christ; the evidence is overwhelming.

In Acts 13:33 Paul quotes Ps.2 which speaks of The Lord enthroned on ZION and ruling the world, God's faithfulness to David made sure. Compare Ps.89. In Acts 13:34, Paul quotes Isaiah 55 which is another passage prophesying Israel's restoration and God's faithfulness to His Word for David and Israel. In Acts 13:47 Paul quotes Isaiah 49 another passage foretelling Israel's restoration according to God's faithfulness for her, please read all these passages.

Now let's turn back to Romans 11 where Paul uses yet another passage from Isaiah:

[Rom 11:26-27](#) And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is My covenant with them, when I have taken away their sins."

[Rom 11:28-29](#) Indeed as regards the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes. But as regards the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the free gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

Rom 11:32 For God has shut up all in unbelief, so that He might show mercy to all.

Rom 11:33 O *the* depth of *the* riches both of *the* wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

Rom 11:34 For **who has known the mind of *the* Lord, or who became His counselor?** (Is.40:13)

Rom 11:35 Or who first gave to Him, and it will be repaid to him?

Rom 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things; to Him be glory forever! Amen.

Oh yes, Israel, like Bar-jesus was stumbling under temporary blindness but they would be saved just like Paul. God's gifts and calling are without change of mind. What did Paul say in Romans 3?

Rom.3:3-4a What if some of them (the Jews) were unfaithful? Their unfaithfulness cannot cancel God's faithfulness, can it? Of course not! (ISV)

What does Paul's doxology include in Romans 11? Yet another quote from Isaiah, this time chapter 40 which opens like this "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God" and includes this great statement by God to His own faithfulness regarding Israel;

Isa 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever.

Isa 40:9 Go up for yourself on the high mountain, bringer of good tidings to Zion. Lift up your voice with strength, O you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem; lift up, do not be afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God! See also verses 10-11 and 3-5.

How much consistent evidence can the word of Truth present? The inclusion of the Gentiles during the Acts period was according to the following:

1. Anticipated historically.
2. Foretold by the Prophets.
3. Secondary to his ministry to Israel.
4. Initiated after the rejection of the message by the Jews in specific locations.
5. Gentiles were included because Israel was partially blinded and stumbling.
6. Gentiles were included to make Israel envious so that Israel might respond to the gospel; turn back to their God who would then turn back to them in faithfulness to all His promises. Israel's partial blindness was an act of mercy.

To include the post Acts administration given to Paul after Israel were put aside at Acts 28 back in these clear historic and prophetic settings of the Acts period is a monumental misunderstanding of Scripture. Our church did not start at the cross, did not start at Acts 2 and certainly did not start with Paul during the Acts period.