

Episode #1041 The Flow of Truth Part 2-The Acts 28:28 Dividing Line

I. Strictly speaking, all truth flows out of the Old Testament into the gospels. It flows out of the gospels into the book of Acts. It flows out of the book of Acts into Paul's final epistles. That is the flow of truth. We are studying this flow and how it can teach us about God's work with us today and how it differs from His work with others in the past and future.

II. Acts 28:28. That statement is either important or unimportant. It either says much or little. It either declares something that has long been true, or something that is going to be true from this point on. It is up to the reader to decide concerning this. His decision will affect his treatment of this passage. My conviction: these words are of the utmost importance, saying much in one statement. They declare a new state of things that were not existing in the Acts period that preceded this pithy announcement. Now, my faith must be backed up by my works, and I will do all the work necessary to understand these words.

- A. The negative aspects of this truth can be traced back, and will have a bearing on everything that took place between Pentecost and Acts 28:28.
- B. The positive aspects will have a bearing on everything that has taken place from Acts 28:28 to all of God's works today.
- C. Our study must begin by searching carefully for the exact meaning of certain, important words used in this proclamation. These meanings are indispensable to our study of Acts and all the epistles in the New Testament.
- D. Four words to be considered in studying Acts 28:28.
 1. Salvation.
 2. Sent.
 3. Gentiles.
 4. Hear.
- E. Some superficial students might say we all know what these words mean. But what would come out of it if we studied these words in the Greek original? At least three have been very poorly translated. These words need to be considered in Greek.

III. The Greek word *sOtErion*. Most important: the subject of the sentence. If we don't know what this means, we will not know what Paul was talking about.

- A. This word does not mean salvation, for if Paul had meant that, he would have used the noun *sOtEria*. This is not the noun; this is an adjective.
- B. The noun *sOtEria* is found 45 times in the New Testament, and is usually translated "salvation" (40 times). The adjective *sOtErion* is found 5 times.
 1. Luke 2:30.
 2. Luke 3:6.
 3. Acts 28:28.
 4. Ephesians 6:17.
 5. Titus 2:11.
- C. The translators have treated this Divinely-inspired adjective as if it were a noun, and it is not. This robs us of the exact truth the Spirit meant to convey when He used this adjective instead of the noun.
- D. This adjective literally means "saving," as when we would say, "saving grace," or "the saving blood of Christ," or "the saving work of Christ." It is also clear that in four of the five New Testament occurrences it is substantivized (used as a noun). Yet it is an adjective, and there is one fixed rule of adjectives that cannot be altered: an

- adjective never stands alone. If it seems to stand alone, as it seems to in these four passages, then the idea the adjectives qualify must be found in the context.
- E. Beyond all question, this word has a technical significance, and is used in a special way in the New Testament and in classical Greek. The New King James translators came close to its meaning in Titus 2:11, “that brings salvation.” The technical meaning of this adjective is salvation-bringing. It is used to describe things that are salvation-bringing, and the lexicons are practically unanimous in regard to this. Abbott-Smith: “saving, or bringing salvation.” Kremer: “saving, bringing salvation.” Liddell and Scott: “saving, delivering, bringing safety.” Thayer: “saving, bringing salvation.” Dr. E.W. Bullinger: “saving, delivering, bringing salvation.” Arndt and Gingrich: “saving, delivering, preserving, bringing salvation.” Moulton and Milligan: “in the papyrus, this word is used in the neuter as a substantive with reference to what produces *soteria* (salvation).” If these people thought a sacrifice would bring salvation or a gift would bring salvation, they would apply this word to it.
- F. This word is an adjective, and an adjective never stands alone in a sentence. This is so true, the word adjective can be used to describe things that do not stand alone. Adjectives are used to modify nouns, and in any sentence in which they seem to stand alone, we must find somewhere the noun that they modify.
1. Example: “It is beautiful.” “This is good.” Beautiful and good are adjectives. We would never know what the speaker is referring to unless we could find something in the physical context that supplies the subject. Example: a sunset, or a meal. Adjectives can be used as substantives only when the idea that is being qualified is clear from the context, written or apparent.
 2. Example: “The young are impatient.” Young what? Animals or people?
- G. With these facts in mind, we can examine the five passages in which *soterion* is found.
1. Luke 2:30. “For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation-bringing.” Salvation-bringing what? This question is good, for it sends us to the context to discover what it is that is described as salvation-bringing. Dr. Moffit: “thy saving power.” Lenski: “Thy saving gift.” Wrong; there is nothing about power or gift in the context, and is just made up. Luke 2:26. When he saw the infant Jesus, He called Him the salvation-bringing Christ. Makes sense!
 2. Luke 3:6. The noun to be supplied is not so readily apparent. Literally, “And all flesh shall see the salvation-bringing of God.” Salvation-bringing what? Quoting Isaiah 40. Verse 5, the glory of the LORD. The noun to be supplied is glory. “And all flesh shall see the salvation-bringing glory of God.”
 3. Ephesians 6:17. This verse belongs to a portion on which so many sermons have been preached that few can now distinguish between the sermons that are preached and the message of God. Literally, “And receive the helmet of the salvation-bringing, even the sword of the Spirit, which is a declaration of God.” Salvation-bringing what? The helmet equals the salvation-bringing. By a further apposition, these are defined as the sword of the Spirit, which is literally defined as being a declaration of God. This should be rendered, “And take the helmet of the salvation-bringing declaration of God.” Not strange that the salvation-bringing declaration is the believer’s helmet and the Spirit’s

sword, for this is setting forth two uses of the same thing. Not mixing metaphors, but two metaphors for two uses of the same thing.

4. Titus 2:11. We do not need to search for the noun the adjective qualifies, for here it is clearly stated. Should read: “For the salvation-bringing grace of God has blazed forth (favorably intervened) in behalf of all men.”
5. Acts 28:28. “Let it then be known to you, that the salvation-bringing of God.” Salvation-bringing what? In the context, this is something the nations will hear. Therefore, it is evident that it is a message. “The salvation-bringing message of God.” Or word, utterance, declaration, or gospel. These terms are synonymous, and all could be used. The subject; something was done with this. What? Brings us to the verb.

IV. Conclusion: Acts 28:28 is a critical dividing line in God’s work. To understand it, we must understand the important words it uses. It is telling us something about the salvation-bringing message of God. Something was done to it, and we will find out what in our next study.