

Episode #1042 The Flow of Truth Part 3-Sent to the Gentiles

I. 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. It has been my conviction for 35 years that this passage is an important dividing line in God's work, the last dividing line separating His works in the past from His current work today. Therefore it becomes critical that we understand it, and that understanding depends on understanding four important words: salvation, sent, Gentiles, and hear. These might be "easy" words in English, but to understand what the Spirit meant by them we need to study them in Greek. Salvation is in Greek an adjective, *soterion*, that means salvation-bringing. In the context, it refers to the salvation-bringing message of God, or word, utterance, declaration, or gospel. The subject; something was done with this. What? Brings us to the verb.

III. "Sent" is the verb that describes the action. Greek word *apostello*. What does it mean?

- A. Even those who know nothing about New Testament Greek will have the feeling *apostello* is familiar. Right; from this verb comes the adjective *apostolos*, often used as a substantive in the New Testament and translated (or carried over as) apostle.
- B. This as the verb describes the action that happened to the salvation-bringing message of God. If we don't understand it, we will never know what took place.
- C. In understanding the 33 unique years that Acts gives the history of, there is no more important word to understand it than the word *apostello*. If this word is misunderstood, everything in the Acts period will be thrown out of line.
- D. *Apostello* has been stultified by weak, inadequate translations, and much truth has been lost as a result.
 1. Matthew 15:24. Not sent (*apostello*) but unto the lost sheep of the house.
 2. Luke 4:43. Therefore am I sent (*apostello*).
 3. John 1:6. There was a man sent (*apostello*) from God.
 4. Acts 3:20. He shall send (*apostello*) Jesus Christ.
 5. Acts 10:36. The word which God sent (*apostello*) unto the children of Israel.
 6. Acts 13:26. To you is the word of this salvation sent (*apostello*).
 7. Romans 10:15. How shall they preach except they be sent (*apostello*).
 8. I Corinthians 1:17. For Christ sent (*apostello*) me not to baptize.
 9. I John 4:14. The Father sent (*apostello*) the Son to be the Savior.
- E. Those nine passages show that great and important truths are expressed by *apostello*. This should quicken our minds to understand this word as well as it can be.
- F. *Apostello* is a verb found 133 times in the New Testament, translated (in the KJV) send 110X, send forth 15X, send away 4X, send out 2X, put in 1X, and set 1X. Send is used as a translation in all but 2 occurrences of this word. Yet this translation is misleading, weak, and inadequate. It dims the glory of this important word, and it holds down the truth that the Spirit of God is revealing.
- G. The Greek word that means to send is *pempō*. That is found 81 times in the NT, translated "send" 79X. This word expresses the idea of causing to go in any manner.
- H. The ancient Greek would use the word *pempō* for an act such as sending someone to the grocery store, but never *apostello*, since that word would be far too strong. This

- term *pempO* has to do with a physical sending or a causing to go. Any ideas beyond this would have to come from the context.
- I. The inadequacy of the KJV translators' treatment of this word is seen in the fact that the substantivized adjective apostle bears no relationship to this verb from which it is derived. Example: wood and wooden go together; do and doer and doing; play, player, and playing; give, giver, and giving. But how do send and apostle go together? The relationship between these two words should never be obscured. Any rendering that does this is misleading and inadequate.
 - J. In John 13:16, *apostolos* is translated "he that is sent," maintaining the connection. But *apostolos* and *apostello* mean far more than sent or a sent one.
 - K. Many lexicons follow the example set by the KJV. Lexicons often define a Greek word by how it has been translated traditionally. *Apostello* "to send forth, to send away from while the sender remains behind." But some lexicographers abandon this superficial definition, realizing those who are the recipients of this action are not always sent from one place to another, and the sender does not always remain behind.
 - L. The meaning of any word in any language depends on the use that is made of it. It can be established from a dozen clear, expressive sentences. With 133 sentences for *apostello*, and *apostolos* 81 times, we can determine its meaning very clearly.
 - M. Dictionaries do not define words; they merely record the usage of words as employed by careful writers. We will define *apostello* through the usage of this word by the inspired writers of the New Testament.
 - N. *Apostello* means "to commission" in the sense of authorizing and instructing one to perform a definite duty. The idea of authorizing is always basic in its meaning. The commission can be very simple, involving a very small task, or very complex, involving great service and responsibilities. Nevertheless, always means this.
 - O. Notary public is the lowest office one can have in our government, yet a notary public is commissioned (authorized) to make acknowledgements of legal papers, which he does under the seal of his office, usually adding a note that his commission expires on a certain date to show his commission is an active one. The Greeks would use *apostello* to describe the act of a governor to authorize such a one, and *apostolos* to describe the result of a commissioned one.
 - P. The word *apostello* never has to do with the appointment of anyone to an office. It has to do with a service to be performed by the one commissioned. Thus the definition: to commission with authority with instruction to perform the service that one is commissioned to do. But wait a moment! This definition applies only when it is used in connection with men, angels, beings as such. When it is used in connection with animals or inanimate things, it takes on a more limited meaning. Its exact meaning is controlled by its context. When in connection with animals or inanimate things it means to authorize, in the sense of making freely available.
 - Q. Matthew 21:1-3. Then sent (*apostello*) Jesus two disciples. A very simple commission, a small thing. And straightway he will send (*apostello*) them. In the first occurrence it is used of men, to commission; in the second of animals, to authorize, to make available. Both Mark and Luke tell us this happened. The owner must have been a good friend of the Lord Jesus; offered the use of his animals to Him.
 - R. To grant or to allow by proper authority is the meaning of *apostello* when used of animals or inanimate objects. That usage is found 9 times in the New Testament.

1. Matthew 21:3, "Straightway he will authorize them."
 2. Mark 4:29, "Immediately he authorizes the sickle."
 3. Mark 11:3, "Straightway he will authorize it."
 4. John 9:7. "Which is by interpretation Authorized."
 5. Acts 10:36. "The word He authorizes to the sons of Israel."
 6. Acts 11:30. "Authorizing it to the elders."
 7. Acts 13:26. "To us was the word of this salvation authorized."
 8. Acts 28:28. "Is authorized to the Gentiles."
 9. Revelation 1:1. "He authorized and signified it."
- S. A third meaning of *apostello*, a derived meaning, is to dismiss, to send away, to banish. Always an authoritative dismissal or banishment. 5 times.
1. Mark 5:10
 2. Mark 12:3
 3. Mark 12:4.
 4. Mark 12:6.
 5. John 18:24.
- T. Summarized: commission, authorization, and direction are the ideas inherent in this word when applied to men, angels, or even Jesus Christ. The idea of authorization becomes paramount when used of animals or inanimate objects. It needs to be remembered that no one can commission or authorize anything unless that one or that thing is at his disposal. This word expresses a commission that can only be personally discharged, so it of necessity involves responsibility. The one commissioned is always the representative of the one who commissions him. As such, he exercises his right. *Apostolos* should never be hardened into an office to which men are appointed. This word denotes a commission or authorization that is limited in time, and is concerned only with the business at hand, not with the person discharging it. A personal commission is the sole ground of being a commissioned one (apostle). None of those who were commissioned by Jesus Christ ever felt that they had attained to some office of an indelible character.
- U. Since Paul in Acts 28:28 is speaking of an inanimate thing, an abstract thing, a salvation-bringing message of God, from our studies we know *apostello* means to authorize, that is, made available without restrictions. The exact form is *apestale*, 3rd person, singular, aorist, passive. This describes the action, telling us what was done. If we fail to understand this word, we will never know what Paul announced had taken place.
- V. Paul said, "Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation-bringing message of God is authorized, that is, made freely available." Unto whom?
- IV. Conclusion: I believe Acts 28:28 to be a crucial turning point in the history of God's dealings with Adam's race. To understand what happened at that point, we must understand what is said. Something happened to God's salvation bringing message at that time. It was authorized or made freely available. Next time, we will consider to whom, and the result, and how and why that was a change.