

Episode #1102 The Flow of Truth Part 12-Finding Your Way Around the Bible

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. Often time people simply cannot find their way around the Word of God because they are not familiar with certain passages. I want to make sure you are familiar with these passages, that you know what they say, and that you are believing what they say.

- A. When Peter got to the household of Cornelius and the house was called together, in Acts 10:34. Peter explains what he means by that. He doesn't simply stop there and say that God shows no partiality. Acts 10:35. Right there that was the basis of a man's relationship with God from the days of Adam right down even to the time in which we live. The basis of acceptance is that a man shall fear God and work righteousness. Now you might say, Well, what is this righteousness? It isn't simply going back to the Bible and picking up a command here and a command there and saying I will do this and that will be righteousness. It's not picking up something about tithing or picking up something about the feasts or picking up something about baptism, and saying I will do this and that will be righteousness. Not at all! For you and for me, when the disciples came to the Lord Jesus Christ in John 6:28-29. For you who hear my voice, and for those who have heard of Jesus Christ, I tell you there is no righteousness that you can do that will make you accepted in the sight of God than to put your faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, to believe in the One Whom God hath sent. Now up to this time, Cornelius had had no such opportunity, but he is going to be given the opportunity. And Peter here, he talks, and he talks not more than about five minutes to say all this if you spoke slowly and carefully. I could read it in one minute, and if I would quote it slowly it would only take two. Yet we know that the house of Cornelius was touched, and that is the last you ever hear about Cornelius. I stress this for the fact that the man Cornelius did not become a herald of the salvation-bringing message to other Gentiles. He may have wished to do this, but he could not do so without a Divine commission. For Paul was the one man whom God commissioned and whom God authorized to proclaim Christ to the Gentiles.
- B. The next passage that I want you to be familiar with and have it fixed in your mind (because if you do not have these passages fixed in your mind, you will have no understanding of certain things), the next passage if found in Romans 15:21. Remember that I told you that it was God's purpose and program in the Acts period that every man, woman, and responsible child in Israel should hear the salvation-bringing gospel and have a clear-cut opportunity to receive the Lord Jesus as the Messiah and personal Savior. Now the Lord had never gone out of the land of Israel, and He told His disciples not to take any road that would lead them to the Gentiles, but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And it was God's determination that to whom He was not spoken of they shall see, not just hear but see, and they that have not heard shall understand. What they will do about it is up to them. But God says they are going to see, they are going to hear, and He is going to get through to them, they will understand. That was God's purpose in the Acts period, and this quotation from Isaiah 52:15 is sufficient to prove the proposition I set forth to you, that every

Israelite was to hear the gospel in the Acts period. Now the reason for that Paul says in verse 20, the reason Paul was such a diligent worker was because of this... If Christ had already been preached and declared in a place, Paul wouldn't go there. He wasn't going simply to build on another man's foundation. What he wanted to do was to speak to those who had not been spoken to, to perform miracles before those who had never seen, and to cause people to understand who had never heard. Verse 22, someone had already spoken in Rome and there was already a company of believers there. Paul would not go and simply build upon another man's foundation. Verse 23, it had all already been finished, by the time Paul wrote Romans, the sound had gone forth. You will read that in Romans 10:18-20. Romans was written very late in the Acts period. And therefore I declare to you: God's purpose was fulfilled, that purpose was accomplished, and according to Romans 15:21-23 and Romans 10:18-21, every Israelite on earth was covered, those outside the land and those inside the land. Every one of them was reached and given a clear-cut opportunity with a Divinely-inspired message, and that message confirmed with the signs following, they were given this opportunity to receive the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and personal Savior.

- C. We were just in Romans 10, and there is another passage I want to bring to your attention, Romans 10:15. The context of this is most important. Verse 13. That is still true. Better establish the right to call, though. Don't try to call on the name of the Lord unless you establish the right to call. Otis Q. Sellers gives the example: I belong to the automobile club AAA of California, and I have the right to call on them if I have a flat tire or run out of gasoline, or need any service of any kind that they provide. I have to establish the right to call first, and if I call on them I expect them to answer. They are the only organization on earth that I belong to, and so far they haven't let me down. I have also established the right to call on the name of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ is my Savior. God is my Father. I have established the right to call upon Him. Verse 14. I do not believe that anyone would call on the Lord who had not believed on him. If I had no faith whatsoever in AAA, they would never get my money that I pay them each year. I would not become a member if I did not have some faith, and faith is belief. Verse 14-Verse 15. Sent is apostello. How shall they proclaim unless they be commissioned? Here is how it operated. In the Acts period, Divinely-commissioned men went forth to herald a Divinely-inspired message. In the Acts period, no one could preach, no one could herald the truth of God unless he was actually commissioned by God to do so. The word is apostello. We often think that there were only 12 apostles. Not at all! Anyone whom God commissioned became an apostle, to whatever extent it may have been, anyone at all who had a Divine commission. And so when they proclaimed the Word, then men heard, and when they heard, then they could believe, and when they believed, then they called. These are the steps in the Acts period. There had to be a God-commissioned man speaking a God-given message. As he spoke this message, men heard, believed, and were saved, and they established the right to call on the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember I told you that in the Acts period, the presentation of Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the gospel of Christ that was the power of God unto salvation to all who believed was done only by God-commissioned and God-authorized men. This proclamation was always absolute truth, it was never written, it was not memorized and then repeated

- over and over, it was always fresh from God each time it was spoken. One man could proclaim it just as well as another, whether he were an ignorant fisherman or an educated statesman. One could proclaim it just as well as another. There were no great preachers in the Acts period, there were no weak preachers in the Acts period. If they went forth and spoke on behalf of God, God supplied the message and God supplied everything that was necessary.
- D. Remember that I told you that in the Acts period they were given only one opportunity to hear the message. That truth that most people seem to stumble at and think it was just preached over and over, but it was not. In the Acts period, man was given only one opportunity, and that is established in Hebrews 6:4-6. Enlightened. As God said, they will hear and they will understand. Now, you know there are many things people hear and understand that they never, never act upon. Think of all the warnings that have been given and how well people understand some things, and yet they go right on doing them. Paul says here, Hebrews 6:4... In the Acts period, if you heard the word of God from a God-commissioned man speaking a God-inspired message, you were enlightened. Tasted. In the Acts period, you always tasted the heavenly gift. There were miracles that you would see. Thus by seeing you became a partaker. The miracle might be performed on you, as was often the case. They did taste of the heavenly gift. They were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. It was the Spirit of God Who was speaking, so in the Acts period everyone who heard the message was made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, that is a going along with the Holy Spirit (the word is not quite as definite as the word partakers, but partakers will do). They tasted the good Word of God and the power of the Eon to come, for that is what they were seeing, for when say a lame man was healed, that spoke of the powers of the eon to come when all lame men would be healed, as God had promised that the lame would leap like the hart and the ears of the deaf would be unstopped and the eyes of the blind would see. Now if they would fall away after all this in the Acts period (this has nothing to do with the dispensation of grace), if in the Acts period after a Divinely-commissioned man came to them speaking a God-inspired message and that message confirmed with signs following, if after all that they fell away, then it was impossible to renew them again to repentance, because they crucified the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame. In the Acts period, one was given one and only one opportunity to hear the message. The heralds of the gospel never spoke it to the same people twice. If one could not believe it without hesitation, the testimony of a God-commissioned man speaking a Divinely-inspired message, and that message confirmed with the signs that followed it, there was nothing more God could do or would do. Those who would not believe under those conditions just demonstrated that they were not worthy to be among the outcalled of God.
- E. The next passage I would call your attention to is in Romans 9:27. This word here is not strictly remnant; it is a residue. It was God's purpose in the Acts period not to save Israel as such. That will come later and God is going to save the people of Israel. God was doing a very special work. Verse 28. Short work = a conclusive and concise work. In other words, God started to do something on the day of Pentecost, and that was all going to be finished and tied up by the time you get to the pronouncement made in Acts 28:28. God's purpose was to save a remnant. These were to be His in the day when He made up His jewels. It was not going to be a long work lasting over

1950 years. This is not the work God is doing today. Paul says here a remnant is going to be saved and they were saved. He says He is going to, as the Greek seems to say, do a conclusive and concise work, and He did. You need to be familiar with that.

- F. Romans 11:13. I have said to you that the apostle Paul was the only man commissioned to the Gentiles. It was not the salvation-bringing message that was authorized, but Paul who could go to the Gentiles. Right here Paul sets forth the fact that he became the mediator between God and the Gentiles in respect to that message. If they heard it, they had to hear it through him. The great principle of one Mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5) did not become true until after Acts 28:28. This is sufficient to show that the apostle Paul was the one who was commissioned to the Gentiles in the Acts period. Today any believer who knows the salvation-bringing message can take that message to any man on earth and never give any consideration to whether this is a Jew or Gentile. But in the Acts period, any God-believing Jew the message came to could proclaim it to a man of Israel. The apostle Paul was the only man who could proclaim it to the Gentiles, and he could do that only on the basis that he had first fulfilled his obligation to the people of Israel.

IV. Conclusion: I have already told you that at the close of the Acts period, God had accomplished everything He had set out to do. Romans 10:18. At the end of the Acts period, no purpose of God had been left unfinished; no project was incomplete. The message had gone forth to the ends of the earth and all Israel had heard, a remnant had been established, a company for his name had been called from among the Gentiles, the blade stage of the kingdom of God had run its full course, and the next stage, the manifest kingdom of God, was all ready to burst on mankind, and yet it did not come. Why not? Because everything has been suspended while God accomplishes a purpose which had never before been revealed. Today it is still suspended. God is taking the time to write into the history of His long dealings with men an absolute record of the grace that is inherent in His character. This is now being done in a dispensation and administration of grace. As I said before and say now in closing, the truths that were applicable in the Acts period may or may not be applicable today. We must ever be studying rightly to divide the word of truth.