

WHAT THE GOSPEL WILL DO

Acts 26:1-19

INTRODUCTION:

- A. When Paul stood before Agrippa and made his defense pertaining to charges brought against him, he related his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus many years before. Acts 26:1-19
- B. He spoke of a bright light at midday, his blindness, and the voice in the Hebrew language
- C. All of which (including being told to go to Damascus to be told what to do Acts 9:6) resulted in the transformation of Saul the persecutor of Christianity to Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.
- D. In this text, Paul tells about instructions given concerning his new work Acts 26:18
- E. Of course, the way Paul would accomplish these purposes would be through faithful service in preaching the gospel 1Cor 9:16.
- F. By a careful analysis of this verse, we can understand what the preaching of the gospel was intended to do for people in Paul's day.
- G. And we can also see what the Gospel will do in our day.

DISCUSSION:

I. IT WOULD "OPEN THEIR EYES"

- A. Paul's work would have an eye-opening effect.
 1. Not referring to physical eyesight but spiritual perception
 2. Necessary because many are spiritually blind: Matt 13:13-15
 3. This spiritual blindness is voluntary; as someone accurately observed, "None are so blind as those who will not see"
- B. God wants to open our eyes; but how does He do it?
 1. Some say it takes a direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Lydia's heart was opened Acts 16:13-14 (How).
 - a. Her heart closed because of lack of understanding of God's word.
 - b. Lord opened her heart by gospel Paul preached
- C. This fact is confirmed by other passages of scripture: 2Cor 4:3-5
 1. Blinded - gospel was veiled to them because the god of world had blinded their minds and kept them from believing it.
 2. Eyes opened when light of gospel would shine on them.
 3. Wouldn't take direct operation of Holy Spirit, but their hearing and accepting the preaching of the gospel of Christ.
- D. Shows necessity of an honest heart being opened by listening to God's word, accepting it as truth, and yielding to it in obedience. Lk 8:15 That's how God opens our eyes

II. IT WOULD "TURN THEM FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT"

- A. "Turn" = to change from one thing into another, as where Jesus turned water into wine, or caterpillar turns into a moth or butterfly.
 1. In original language of NT, same word that's translated "turn" is often rendered "be converted": Acts 3:19.

2. But when does this turning or conversion take place--notice the parallel between this passage and: Acts 2:38
- B. So, this turning or conversion is something different from and in addition to requirement of faith: Acts 11:20-21.
 1. Many have been taught when one believes he is automatically converted or saved by faith only.
 2. Yet, those in Antioch not only believed but also turned to Lord
- C. But right now we want to notice what led them to turn to the Lord
 1. The preaching of gospel just as in Acts 17:1-4, 1Thess 1:9-10
 2. Paul's preaching turned them from idols to serve God.
- D. So, true gospel preaching causes people to obey God's commands in repentance and baptism, thus turned from darkness to light

III. IT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO "RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND AN INHERITANCE"

- A. Forgiveness of sins is so important that Jesus came and died to make it available to man Matt 26:28;
 1. However, the shedding of Christ's blood isn't the only thing involved in receiving forgiveness of sins Note Heb 9:11-15; 10:3; 16-18
 2. God says there's something we must do: Acts 22:16
 3. Only those who obey the gospel can have their sins remitted or washed away by the blood of Jesus
- B. Forgiveness of sins is attributed to:
 1. God's grace, because He devised the plan;
 2. Jesus' blood, because His death carried out God's plan
 3. Man's faith because we must act in faith to receive benefits
- C. As noted it takes gospel preaching Rom 1:16
- D. Gospel preaching brings obedience to God's will, to receive forgiveness of sins by God's grace through Christ's blood.
- E. However, it doesn't end there.
 1. Gospel teaches faithfulness to Lord all our lives to have the hope of God's inheritance 1Pet 1:3-5; Rev 2:10; Matt 10:22
 2. We simply can't receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance from God apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ

CONCLUSION:

- A. Jesus wants the gospel to be preached Mk 16:15.
- B. The gospel is the message of God's grace: Acts 20:24
- C. It's based upon death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus 1Cor 15:1-4
- D. Therefore, it's the gospel of our salvation: Eph 1:13
 1. Paul preached this gospel in first century--he said Col 1:23
 2. The gospel continues to be the greatest need for mankind today.
 3. When preached, it will have the same effect today that it did then.
- E. Do you need to obey the gospel in order that you might have your eyes opened, be turned from darkness to light, and receive forgiveness of sins? Remember: Acts 22:16.