

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 65 ACTS 20:26-32

### ACTS 20:17-38 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIANS

- Verses 17-25 – *see session 64*
- Verse 26 –
  - Paul wanted it to be clear that he was **pure from the blood of all**. The word **pure** is καθαρός [katharos], an adjective describing Paul as *clean*. That is, he was not guilty of any physical harm that would come upon his listeners, because he had fully warned them.
  - Two things are worthy of discussion:
    - Similar to this passage, in Acts 18:6 Paul left the synagogue in Corinth, proclaiming, **Your blood be upon your own heads**. From there he went to the Gentiles, where we can *presume* he shared the Gospel of personal salvation, not the Kingdom Gospel.
    - In Ezekiel 33:1-9, there is a warning to Ezekiel to be the **watchman unto the hours of Israel** (v. 7). If Ezekiel does not sound the warning, God would hold Ezekiel responsible for the wicked man's blood (v. 8). There is no reason to spiritualize the warning to Ezekiel in order to make it apply to personal evangelism in the age of grace. The Ezekiel passage is about the *physical* destruction (i.e.: blood) of Jerusalem due to the wickedness of the nation. In Acts 20:26-28, the apostle Paul has made note that he has warned the Jewish people concerning **the Kingdom of God** (v. 25) and thus he is free from **the blood** that would come upon the nation of Israel for her lack of repentance.
- Verse 27:
  - These words are tremendously enlightening (and essential to understanding Ephesians). Paul declares that he taught **all the counsel of God**. We can presume that this is *the Kingdom Gospel* as well as *the Personal Gospel*.
  - If this is a correct assumption, then Paul teaches both Kingdom and Grace (national and personal, respectively) *at the same time*.
  - To prove that this assumption is correct, one needs to look no further than the context of this verse.
    - Verse 24: Paul speaks of his ministry, **which I have received of the Lord** (that is, by revelation, not passed down from Peter). This ministry was **to testify the gospel of the grace of God**. The Kingdom Gospel was not received **of the Lord**, except indirectly through the Prophets and Apostles.
    - Verse 25: Paul says that he has **gone preaching the kingdom of God**, a message of repentance and obedience.
    - Verse 26: Paul says he is **pure from the blood of all men**.
    - Verse 27: Paul says he declared **all the counsel of God**. Can we make any other conclusion except that **all the counsel** is *both* Gospels?
  - When reading Ephesians, then, we should read it with the expectation of two groups of people (a conclusion we quickly get simply by the pronouns within the book of Ephesians itself, even without this passage).
- Verse 28 –

- It can be *reasonably* but not *definitely* proven that the elders were Jewish men and the reference here to **all the flock** is the same as the **little flock** of Luke 12:32, which will be given the Kingdom.
  - Shepherd and flock analogy is therefore Jewish in nature.
  - If this is so, then **the church of God** is the remnant of Israel, which **he hath purchased with his own blood**.
- The *redemption* of Israel was a *purchase*, while the salvation of the individuals is a *gift* given by the victory won at the cross.
- In Ephesus, the **Holy Ghost** appointed the **overseers**, whereas later Titus would be instructed to **ordain elders in every city** (Titus 1:5), and men would be commended for desiring the office of a bishop (1 Tim. 3:1).
  - The Holy Ghost direct appointment appears to be for the *kingdom assembly* rather than the *Pauline* assembly.
- Note that these men are called **elders** in Acts 20:17 and **overseers** (Bishops) in Acts 20:28, thus showing that the terms can be used interchangeably.
- Verses 29-30 –
  - It did not take a “rocket scientist,” nor a special revelation to recognize that Paul’s ministry was going to be attacked. Here, Paul warns them that the attack would come from the outside *and* from the inside.
  - This can serve as a good reminder for us that no battle is ever fully won, and diligence in doctrine must always be near our thinking.
- Verse 31 –
  - Paul’s ministry among the Ephesians was his longest anywhere. During these **three years** he *warned them*. The word **warn** is νουθετέω [noutheteo], based on the root τιθημι [tithemi], which is “to set in place.”
    - The root itself is used in verse 28, **hath made**.
    - The root is used here with the prefix *nous*, which is thinking. Thus *noutheteo* is literally “to set thinking in place.” Here translated as **warn**.
    - The root is used in verse 32 with the prefix *peri*, which is “to come along side setting in place.” The *peri* words are “almost” words. Paul “almost” set in place, but in verse 32 allows God to do that work.
- Verse 32 –
  - God and **the word of his grace** would accomplish two things among these elders: it would *build them* and it would *give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified* (i.e.: the Jewish remnant, to whom the inheritance was to be given).