

The Road From Jerusalem To Ephesus (Part 1)

August 23, 2009

“The Coming of The Spirit and The Day Of Judgment”

The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

How do we get from Jerusalem...
to the City of Ephesus?

“Ephesus” / “Ephesians” appears 20X throughout the NT and 12X in Acts

So how is it that we get from Jesus’ Great Commission to the Apostles to the City of Ephesus...and thus what is known as the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians?

We shall take several weeks to unfold this issue, which will give us a more clear context and understanding of this most excellent letter, epistle.

Let’s recall the Great Commission in Matthew and Jesus last instructions to His friends before ascending, returning to heaven:

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

And

Acts 1:4-8 ESV

(4) And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (6) So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. (8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

See map of Jerusalem, Judea / Samaria and the ends of the earth

INSIDE THE HOUSE

Acts 2:1-4 ESV

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3) And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

When: The Day of Pentecost
50 days after Passover

Where: Inside the house

All together in one place. Doing what? Waiting for the promised Holy Spirit as Jesus said...whatever that meant!

Acts 1:14 ESV All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Suddenly **there came from heaven**

Don't miss that:

This is Christianity! Someone came from Heaven...Jesus

- All was created by the King of Heaven!
- Life is from Heaven!
- The concept of grace instead of just judgment...is from heaven
- The accomplisher of salvation is from heaven
- The works of God are from heaven
- The power of the Holy Spirit is from heaven
- The gifts of God for life and godliness come from heaven

Christianity is the one and only religion that teaches ... "there came from heaven"
All others teach earth reaches up to heaven

Suddenly there came from heaven

- An audible manifestation of the Holy Spirit: a sound LIKE a mighty rushing wind (filled the entire house...no little peep)
- A visual manifestation of the Holy Spirit: "divided tongues as of fire"
- A most unusual manifestation: speaking in tongues / languages

The promised Holy Spirit comes:

John the Baptist foretold this: Matthew 3:11 ESV "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Jesus Foretold this:

John 15:26 ESV "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

Peter says Joel foretold this in Acts 2:16-21

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

Acts 2:5-11 ESV

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. (6) And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. (7) And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? (8) And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? (9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10) Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, (11) both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians--we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

Nations from around the world are gathered:

They were "bewildered", "amazed" and "astonished" ...as they ought be for God has shown up!

Our God is no ordinary God!

Can't prescribe to Him

Can't dictate to Him

Can't contain Him

Can't figure Him out

Our God is a "bewildering" God

Here is the role of nations: SEE MAP

However it was that the apostles were impacted by God and now communicating on His behalf...these visitors heard them: "Telling the Mighty works of God"

Ps 145-like?

Psalms 145:1-13 ESV A Song of Praise. Of David. I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. (2) Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. (3) Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. (4) One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. (5) On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. (6) They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. (7) They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. (8) The LORD is

gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (9) The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. (10) All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! (11) They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, (12) to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. (13) Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. [The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.]

Job 38?

Job 38:1-13 ESV Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: (2) "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? (3) Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. (4) "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. (5) Who determined its measurements--surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? (6) On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, (7) when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (8) "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, (9) when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, (10) and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, (11) and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'? (12) "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, (13) that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?

To their question as to what does this mean? Peter gives the ultimate meaning of whats going on here:

Bible grounded

Jesus-centered

God-sovereign

Crucifixion / resurrection of Jesus focused

For Jesus is both Lord and Christ!

Some of these gathered nations of people were "cut to the heart" convicted of their heinous murder of the Author of Life!

This was another work of God the Holy Spirit, who came from heaven...conviction of sin is a work of God upon the heart and soul of man...man cannot convict himself of sin, for he, me, you, we love sin! God must do this first and primary work!

Acts 3:26 ESV God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

And He proclaims to them, in their convicted state, free forgiveness in Jesus and the promise of the Spirit to be with you and in you! God reconciling man to Himself!

So What of all this?

Whats really going on here?

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ is going forth to the nations...BEFORE...the gospel of Jesus Christ goes out to the nations!

To the Jew first...then also to the greek (gentile)

God fulfills His promise in Jesus' death & resurrection to the serpent in Gen 3.15

God fulfills His promise to Abraham, that "all families / nations on earth will be blessed through you. Gen 12-15

2. The gospel of Jesus Christ goes forth to Ephesus long before the gospel came to the Ephesians.
3. The gospel of Jesus Christ is on its way to you long before you come to realize it!

See Ephesians 1:

Ephesians 1:3-12 ESV Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (5) he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (6) to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (7) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (8) which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (9) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ (10) as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (11) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (12) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

God's plan for the ages in the gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ, is set! And now, in time and space it is in motion long before we come to realize it – then one day, He grants us to realize, see, believe His wisdom, power, majesty and grace in Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself for us!

Amen!