

All Asia turned from Paul

When we read in 2 Tim. 1:15 that all those in Asia turned from *Paul*, we wonder what it was about Paul that so irritated people. It helps to know the precise wording of the text:

“Of this you are aware, that all those in the province of Asia were turned from me.”

These people were *turned* from Paul. Did they chuck belief altogether—or only



Paul's version of it? Who—or what—lured them from the apostle of grace? Law! Those who forsook Paul did not necessarily forsake Jesus; they forsook grace. Paul's gospel was too much God and not enough man. The pull to “do something” became too great, and the believers could no longer distinguish their special calling from that of Israel. ■

Fact!

“Paul, a slave of Christ...severed for the evangel of God...concerning His Son” (Rom. 1:3).

Paul's evangel does not concern the sinner, but God's Son!

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

“If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong” --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

Why so sad? The gospels are Jewish

One of the most important truths a believer can grasp today is that the four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are Jewish. There is so much in these writings that has frightened and depressed people: **1)** threats of the fires of Gehenna (“hell” in the common versions), **2)** giving all you have to the poor and following Christ, **3)** riches keeping you from entering the kingdom, **4)** ridding your life of lust—or else, **5)** losing your soul to gain it, **6)** picking up your cross. In these accounts, Jesus comes across as a real downer. Who wants to do this stuff? What people don't realize is that Jesus, on earth, was the last of the Old Testament prophets and that His message jived with the law of Moses. Jews deep down like a message that mixes law with grace; God

I'm so tired of trying to be Jewish!



has programmed them to *want* to do stuff. Paul's message to the nations is one of *not* working (Rom. 4:5). He tells of God's happiness (1 Tim. 1:11) and our helplessness (Rom. 5:6). The evangel of the Uncircumcision is a welcomed message of grace and enjoyment. Why be a sad, misguided Jewish hero? Get smart. Get Paul. ■

Want to fail? Then base a church on the Book of Acts

Modern Christians look to the book of Acts as a formula for how to build a church. Turning to chapter 2 and the day of Pentecost, they start by championing baptism and repentance. Next, they try to speak in other languages. Some even go so far as to sell all their goods and have all things in common, as the early disciples did. Next thing you know, they start wearing robes and making pilgrimages to the Holy Land. One guy I know actually attempted to raise the dead. But the Acts administration is a recipe for failure. Why? Because the Acts administration, itself,

failed. It began in glory and ended with James killed, Peter exiled, Jerusalem starved, and the Jews scattered. This administration was *meant* to fail. Why? It was another demonstration of Israel's stubbornness. Apparently, stubbornness dies hard. ■



Nice tent. They're about to revive Israel's failure.

Sorry for the confusion, folks

Many people have said to me: “Martin, you teach too much grace. You put too much responsibility on God and not enough on man. Your brand of salvation makes people lazy.” These folks then dab the sweat from their tortured, furrowed brows and deliver what they believe to be the killing blow: **“Zender, you make salvation cheap!”** My answer is always the same. “Oh, my gosh. Do I? I sure as heck don't mean to. Salvation is certainly not cheap. Sorry about that. What I mean to say is that: *salvation is free.*” ■

The opposite of election is not eternal damnation

In Luke 23:35, our Lord is called, "...the Christ of God, the Chosen One." To be chosen is to be elect. "The elect!" Now there's a scary theological term. According to orthodox teaching, the elect are saved and the non-elect are damned. If that's the



case, then we're all damned. Why? Because if Jesus Christ is *the* Elect, then the rest of us are non-elected. But no. Election is never an end, but the means to an end: salvation. As the Elect of God, Jesus Christ doesn't damn; He saves. To God, election is not a

means to damn the non-elect, but an avenue for the salvation of the non-elect. You see? God uses the elect to reach the non-elect. The elected are elected to save, not to sit back and watch the others burn. As with Christ, thus also with us and a regenerated Israel.

Their election saves those on earth; ours, those in heaven. **The elect save; the non-elect get saved.** Who is left out? Is there some other category besides the elect and the non-elect? Who could possibly complain about this divine arrangement? ■



Better than winning the lottery.

Election is salvation-*PLUS*. It is *more* than salvation. It is a rare honor that not only saves us, but places us at the forefront of all of God's future activities.

Talk about "one giant leap"

WE WILL BE THE FIRST HUMAN BEINGS TO EXPERIENCE IMMORTALITY

Besides our Lord Jesus Christ, no other human has ever experienced immortality. Lazarus was resurrected, yes, but not vivified; he died again. To be vivified is to be made alive beyond the reach of death. I used to envy Neil Armstrong—wow, first man on the moon. But what is that compared with the frontier *I'm* about to step through? ■

WHAT A REVELATION!

JESUS CHRIST:
THE PERFECT BRIDGE
BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Theology likes to say that our Lord Jesus Christ was "fully God and fully man." Neither is true. As usual, theology gets everything wrong. Our Lord demonstrated in many ways that He had a God: He prayed to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:39); He said that the Father was greater than He (Jn. 14:28); He claimed to speak the Father's words, not His own (Jn. 14:24). None of these things can be said of Absolute Deity. And yet neither was our Lord fully man; He was born of woman, but was at the same time the only human ever generated by spirit rather than sperm. Let us, therefore, worship Christ for what He is: a unique Creation perfectly suited to be the Bridge between God and mortal humanity. ■



Q&A

Paul says in **Philippians 1:21**, "For to me to be living is Christ, and to be dying, gain." Doesn't this prove that Paul thought dying would re-unite him with Christ? —*Jim T., Brooklyn*

Dear Jim: No. Paul knew that the only way he would see Christ was by resurrection, not death. Paul taught that apart from resurrection, those who have been put to repose in Christ have *perished* (1 Cor. 15:17-18). It is a serious mistake to substitute death for resurrection. The "gain" Paul refers to here would be gain to the cause of Christ, which his martyrdom would surely accomplish. ■

Evil: Gone yesterday, gone tomorrow

God created the eons so that He might have a framework of time on which to hang His revelations. Evil is an exclusive phenomenon of the eons. Before the eons, there was no evil; after the eons, evil will be but a distant memory. This is good to know, because the grace given us by God was given to us *before* times eonian, that is, before evil existed and could have corrupted it.

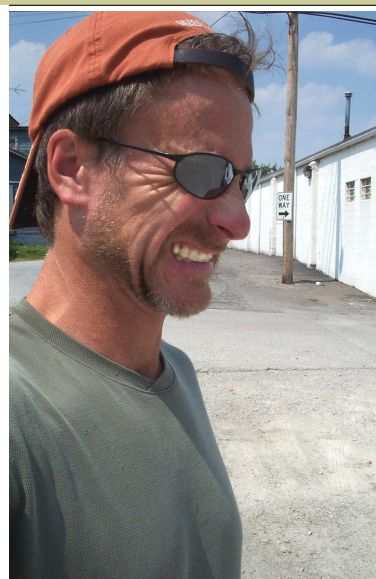
"You may not be ashamed, then, of the testimony of our Lord, nor yet of me, His prisoner, but suffer evil with the evangel in accord with

the power of God, Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian."

Timothy must have been so discouraged by all the evil in the world that he needed this exhortation from his mentor. "Why be unduly affected by evil," Paul says, "since God's purpose for your life was signed, sealed and secured before evil existed?" No evil acts can foul up our calling—*not even our own*. ■

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.



Is the KJV “better than nothing”? Not really.

I'll never forget hanging out in Toronto with a very zealous believer named Paul. He had bought several dozen pocket-sized King James Versions and was intent on distributing them at strategic points around the city. “Where do you think would be a good place?” he asked me. “In hotel lobbies? At restaurant tables? In the subway? On top the CN tower? On top of toilets in public rest rooms?” I thought the CN tower and the toilet ideas were sterling, but in need of tweaking. “How about tossing them *from* the CN tower, and putting them *in* the toilets,” I suggested. This made Paul mad. “Look,” he said, “I know you’re not crazy about the KJV because of the mis-translations of *aion*, or whatever, that promote eternal torment. But giving these people *something* is better than giving them nothing.” I shook my head.



“Not really, Paul. When it comes to someone getting the false idea that God will eternally torment most of His creation, nothing is definitely better. The front of

that book you’re holding says, ‘The Holy Bible,’ and it puts the word ‘everlasting’ next to the word ‘punishment’ in Matthew 25:46. How can you do that to someone—how can you do it to *God*—when you know it’s not right?”

This happened in 1995. For some reason, I haven’t seen Paul since. And neither have I changed my mind about the KJV. ■



“A word to the wise ain’t necessary - it’s the stupid ones that need the advice.”

—Bill Cosby



JUST BELIEVE THE OPPOSITE

by M. Zender



Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this ministry. I literally could not do it without you. Every time I receive support from you, it is like God saying to me: “Keep going, Zender!” God speaks through your generosity.

—Martin