**Paul’s Last Meeting with the Jewish Leaders**

(Acts 28:17-31)

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

 A man came home from work one day and said to his wife, “I got fired today.” She asked, “What happened?” He replied, “The boss called me in for a meeting and said, ‘You’re in charge of safety here in our workplace. What steps would you take in the event of a fire?’” I told him, “Really *big ones.”*

 Speaking of meetings with bosses, here in the last chapter of the Book of Acts, the apostle Paul is meeting with the bosses of the Jews who lived in Rome in the very last meeting he would ever have with Jewish leaders before God closed the book on the nation Israel at the end of the Book of Acts. The story begins in verse 17, but let’s get a running start by beginning in verse 16, and reading down through verse 18:

 **“And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.**

 **“And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.**

 **“Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me” (Acts 28:16-18).**

As you can see, when Paul met with the Jewish leaders in Rome, he was a prisoner who was being kept by a Roman soldier. And when he told the Jews he’d been arrested *in Jerusalem,* he knew they’d think he’d done something against “the people” of Israel in Jerusalem. So he makes it crystal clear from the outset here that he’d committed no crimes against the Jews. And if they didn’t believe him, the Roman soldier who was keeping him could verify that he’d been examined by the Romans and found innocent of all charges.

 But that begs the question of why he hadn’t been *released* by the Romans if they had found him innocent. We find the answer to that question in the next verse of our text, where Paul told the Jews,

 **“But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of” (Acts 28:19).**

Paul hadn’t been released because the Jews in Jerusalem had spoken *against* his release. so the apostle had to appeal his case to Caesar to get released from Roman custody.

 Now you’d think that when those Jews spoke against Paul that he would have held it against them. But at the end of verse 19 he assures us otherwise when he said, “not that I had ought against my nation.” And we have a word for that kind of response. It’s called *grace.* Paul could have decided to hold a grudge against those Jews for giving him grief like that. Instead, he remembered what God does when we grieve Him—He just keeps on being gracious to us. As that old song goes, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth more grace.

 Is that what you do when someone gives you grief? Or do you do what a lot of people do and decide that, when someone gives you grief, you’re not just going to hold it against *him,* you’re going to hold it against *his entire nation.* We have words for *that* kind of response as well. It’s called *racism,* and *bigotry,* and being *prejudiced.*

 Do you know what the *answer* to racism is? *Grace!* And it’s how we should respond when we’re wronged—at least if we want to be like God, and if we want to be like Paul in our walk as well as in our doctrine. Paul didn’t hold it against *all* Jews just because *some* Jews spoke against him. If he did, he would have stopped giving Jews the gospel. Instead, he went on to tell *these* Jews, as it were,

 “For this cause therefore—for the cause of me not having anything against my nation, for the cause of *grace,* have I called for *you,* to see *you,* and to speak *with you:* because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain” (Acts 28:20).

 Now that exact phrase, “the hope of Israel,” is only used two other times in the Bible. The first is in Jeremiah 14:8, where the prophet prayed,

 **“O the hope of Israel, *the Saviour thereof in time of trouble...”* (Jeremiah 14:8).**

Jeremiah identified the hope of Israel as *her Savior,* whom we now know was the Lord Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form. And the prophet identified Israel’s hope as her Savior again when he prayed a few chapters later,

 **“O LORD, the hope of Israel...*save me,* and I shall be saved” (Jeremiah 17:13,14).**

 But now, the problem with the hope of Israel here in the Book of Acts was that the Jews had *crucified* their Savior, and thus *eliminated their hope.* So the hope of Israel was *now* found in Christ’s resurrection. Without the resurrection of Christ, *nobody* had any hope of being saved from their sins, as Paul told some Gentiles in I Corinthians 15:17, where he wrote,

 **“if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; *ye are yet in your sins.”***

And it was for *preaching* that hope that Paul was bound with that chain. It’s the reason those unsaved Jews in Jerusalem had had Paul arrested in the first place.

 But if those Jews in Jerusalem were *that* against Paul, you’d think that when he got sent to Rome that they would have sent word to the Jews in Rome to tell *them* to speak against Paul. But as we read on, we see that that’s not what happened:

 **“And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee” (Acts 28:21).**

So now we have to ask: if the Jews in Jerusalem hated Paul *that much,* how come they *didn’t* send letters to the Jews in Rome speaking harm of him, and telling *them* to speak against Paul?

 Well, what we are seeing here is proof that the Jewish persecution of Paul was *dying out.* Once Paul left Jerusalem, the Jews in Jerusalem decided that, now that he was out of *their* hair, that’s all they cared about!

 Now compare that to what happened back in Acts 17:1-13, where we read,

 **“...when they...came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue...Paul...reasoned with them...but the Jews...set all the city on an uproar...And the brethren...sent...Paul...unto Berea....but...the Jews of Thessalonica...*came thither also,* and stirred up the people.”**

In the early days of Paul’s ministry, the Jews were not content to just ride Paul out of town on a rail. They made sure he was persecuted in the *next* town as well, so vitriolic was their hatred for him. But here at the *end* of Acts, some thirty years later, the intensity of their persecution has disappeared, at least as far as the record of Scripture goes. And our relationship Paul’s followers have had with Jews ever since is more like the Cold War we had with Russia for many years than the hot war we had with Germany and Japan.

 And because of *that,* Jews are now more open to the gospel than they were in the beginning of the dispensation of grace. We see that transition pictured in verse 22 of our text, where Luke wrote,

 **“But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against” (Acts 28:22).**

Now the “sect” they were talking about there was “the sect *of the Nazarenes”* (Acts 24:5). The followers of Jesus of Nazareth were called Nazarenes. And the only thing the Jews in Rome knew about that sect was that people spoke against it everywhere.\* So they naturally asked to hear *more* about this Jesus of Nazareth guy, and in verse 23,

\*God’s truth is always “spoken against” in every dispensation, while the devil’s lies “cannot be spoken against” (Acts 19:36).

 **“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23).** Now here it helps to understand that when the apostle Paul talked about the kingdom of God, he didn’t mean the *future* kingdom that Jews will live in here on earth for 1,000 years with Christ as their king. Paul never preached that *future* kingdom. He preached the one he told the Colossians about, saying,

 **“the Father...*hath* translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:12,13).**

The kingdom that Paul preached was a kingdom that’s already in existence, one that God has *already* translated us into, the *overall* kingdom of God that consists of the saved of all ages. And since it’s the kingdom of God’s dear Son, he *talked* to those Jews about God’s dear Son *out of their own Old Testament Scriptures* from morning till evening. If you ever wondered how much there is in the Old Testament about the Lord Jesus Christ, the answer is that there’s enough there to talk about Him all day long—if you know how to look for Him in the types.

 \*And here you thought your pastor gave long messages!

 And what Paul is doing here in verse 23 is symbolic of what he said about God in Romans 10:21, where he wrote,

 **“...to Israel He saith, *All day long* I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”**

 When Paul talked to the Jews about Christ from morning till evening, it typified how that, even this late in Acts, God was *still* reaching forth His hands to Israel all day long—from morning to evening—through Paul’s ministry, just as He’d *been* doing for the past thirty years in the Book of Acts. But that’s about to come to an end here in the final chapter of Acts, as we’ll see in a moment.

 In the meantime, what we’re seeing here in verse 23 is God giving the Jews one last, mighty, day-long testimony—just like the one last mighty testimony Paul gave them when he healed a whole island full of people in Chapter 27, as we talked about in our last lesson. God was *bending over backwards* for the nation Israel *all the live long day* before closing the book on her. And yet, verse 24 says,

 **“And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not” (Act 28:24).**

Paul poured his heart out to his countrymen in one last day-long testimony, but he got the same reaction he always got. Some believed it, and some didn’t.

 But you’ll notice that the ones that *didn’t* believe didn’t contradict Paul and blaspheme, the way unbelieving Jews earlier in Acts, as we see when

 **“...the Jews...*spake against* those things...spoken by Paul, *contradicting and blaspheming...*Paul...testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. *And...they...blasphemed”* (Acts 13:45; 18:5,6).**

Unbelieving Jews weren’t shy about expressing their unbelief earlier in Acts. But here the Jews who didn’t believe just left Paul standing there, as we see in verse 25. Let’s read the next three verses together to get the flow of the context:

 **“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,**

 **“Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:**

 **“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:25-27).**

Now that’s a lot more than “one word,” of course. But that’s what blabby preachers like Luke *call* one word!

 He’s actually using the word “word” in the way we use it when we ask someone, “What’s the word?” or “What’s the good word?” We ask that expecting to hear a *message,* and not a single word.

 And the message Paul’s quoting here is the one the prophet Isaiah gave the Jews in his day in Isaiah 6, because the Jews in his day had shut their ears to the message God gave him to give to them. But Paul applied Isaiah’s words to the Jews in *his* day because the Jews were *now* turning a deaf ear to the message God was giving them through Paul.

 But the way God *reacted* to the Jews’ rejection of His words in Paul’s day is different than the way he reacted to their rejection in Isaiah’s day. In Paul’s day, God reacted *with grace,* by introducing *the dispensation* of grace. But in Isaiah’s day, God reacted to their unbelief with *judgment,* a judgment Isaiah described at the *end* of Isaiah 6, where he wrote,

 **“...the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the LORD...removed men far away...” (Isaiah 6:11,12).**

If you know your Old Testament well, you know what the prophet was describing here. God reacted to Israel’s rejection of His words in Isaiah’s day by allowing King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to *conquer* Israel, remove them from their land, and carry them away to Babylon to live *as slaves.* And that’s because, under the law of Moses, God had *told* the Jews that that’s what He’d do if they didn’t listen to Him.

 Then, over in the New Testament, when the Jews didn’t listen to the Lord Jesus, He told His disciples, “In *them”—*in the Jews of *His day,*

 **“...in *them* is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive” (Matthew 13:14).**

When the Jews didn’t listen to the Lord, *He too* quoted Isaiah 6, because *He too* was under the law (Gal.4:4). So He too went on to warn the Jews that God would judge them for not listening, as we see in Luke 21:20-26, where He told them,

 **“...when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies...Then...*flee to the mountains*...For these be the days of vengeance....But woe unto them...with child... for there shall be *great distress...*and *wrath* upon this people...and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles...And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars...*dis-tress of nations*...the sea and the waves roaring...*for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”***

 That’s a description of the Tribulation, in which the antichrist will lead the armies of the Gentiles against Jerusalem and leave the nation Israel as desolate as Babylon had left her. And that great time of distress and tribulation would have come if God hadn’t interrupted the *New Testament* fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy with the dispensation of the mystery. But He *did* interrupted it, and put His “wrath” on hold.

 But if that’s so, why is *Paul* quoting Isaiah 6 here?

 Well, when Paul applied Isaiah’s words to the Jews of *his* day, thirty years after the Lord applied them, he didn’t threaten them with the Tribulation. Instead, he told them,

 **“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts 28:28).**

Paul didn’t say that God would send the Jews *judgment* for not hearing God’s words, because that was God’s message for them *under the law.* Paul said that God was just taking His salvation and sending it to the Gentiles, because that’s how God chose to react to the Jews’ rejection of His words *under grace.*

Now sending God’s salvation to the Gentiles didn’t mean that Jews couldn’t be saved any more. It just meant they had to look to Gentiles to *get* saved. It’s the very *opposite* of how things used to be. Back when the Lord was here on earth He told a Gentile that

 **“salvation *is of the Jews”* (John 4:22).**

That didn’t mean Gentiles couldn’t be saved in those days. It just meant that if a Gentile *wanted* to get saved, he had to look to the Jews to *get* salvation, because they had the Old Testament Scriptures that told men *how* to be saved. But now that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, if a Jew wants to be saved, he has to look to the Gentiles, because now *Gentiles* have the Scriptures that tell men how to be saved *in Paul’s epistles* to the Gentiles.

 Now this switch in the spiritual leadership of the world isn’t what was supposed to be happening by this time in the Book of Acts. God had promised the Jews,

 **“ye shall be named *the Priests of the LORD:* men shall call you *the Ministers of our God”* (Isaiah 61:6).**

God promised the Jews that someday they would be the spiritual leaders of the world in the kingdom of heaven on earth, a kingdom in which Gentiles would look to God’s priests *in Israel* for salvation. And according to the prophetic timetable that the prophet Daniel gives us in Daniel 9, that’s what was supposed to be happening by this time in Acts. But it most certainly wasn’t!

 God *also* promised the Jews that they’d be the *political* leaders of the world, as we see when Moses told His people,

 **“...if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD...*the LORD shall make thee the head,* and not the tail....But...if thou wilt *not* hearken unto the voice of the LORD...*The stranger...shall be the head,* and thou shalt be the tail”** (**Deuteronomy 28:1,13, 15,43,44).**

God told the Jews that as long as they didn’t shut their ears to His words, they would be the political head of all the Gentile nations. And that’s what they were in the days of King David and King Solomon. But when they shut their ears to Him in Isaiah’s day, God made *Nebuchadnezzar* the head of the nations. Daniel told him,

 ***“God...hath given thee a kingdom*...and wheresoever...men dwell...He...hath made thee *ruler over them all.*  Thou art...*head*...” (Daniel 2:37,38).**

And Gentile rulers like King Nebuchadnezzar have been the political heads of the world ever since.

 But when that happened, the nation Israel continued to be the *spiritual* head of the world—right up until our text passage here in Acts 28, when God sent His salvation to the Gentiles. And the Gentiles have been the spiritual leaders of the world ever since, through the Gentile epistles of Paul.

 Now the Jews in Paul’s day couldn’t say that God didn’t warn them that this change was coming, for this is the third time Paul had told them that He was turning to the Gentiles. The first time came in Acts 13 where Paul told the Jews in Antioch,

 **“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you*:* but seeing ye put it from you...*we turn to the Gentiles”* (Acts 13:46).**

 That was the *first* warning shot God fired across the bow of the ship of Israel. The next came a few chapters later in Corinth:

 **“in the synagogue...when they...blasphemed, he...said...*I will go unto the Gentiles”* (Acts 18:4,6).**

And here in Acts 28, Paul is telling the Jews *again* that God was turning to the Gentiles. So the Jews couldn’t complain that God didn’t warn them they were about to lose the spiritual headship of the world to the Gentiles.

 And back in Isaiah’s day, they couldn’t say God didn’t warn them that they were about to lose the *political* headship of the world either, for He had warned that *that* would happen *three times also.* He had the prophet Ezekiel tell the king of Israel,

 **“...thou, profane wicked prince of Israel...Thus saith the LORD God...take off the crown...*I will* *overturn, overturn, overturn, it:* and it shall be no more...” (Ezekiel 21:25-27).**

God told the king of Israel to take off the crown of the world that Jewish kings wore in the days of David and Solomon because He was about to overturn, or we’d say *overthrow,* Solomon’s kingdom. And the reason He said He’d overturn it three times was because He planned to overturn the throne of Israel *in three stages.* That is, He let Nebuchadnezzar conquer Israel in what military strategists would call three *waves* of attack, as we see in II Chronicles 36:5-19 where, speaking of that wicked prince of Israel, we read:

 **“...Jehoiakim...reigned...in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil...Against him came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, *and...carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon*...Jehoiachin...reigned...and *he* did...evil...And... Nebuchadnezzar...brought him to Babylon, *with the...vessels of the house of the LORD*...But they mocked the messengers of God, *and despised His words*...until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, *till there was no remedy*...and *all* the vessels of the house of God...he brought to Babylon.”**

God allowed Babylon’s king to conquer Israel in three waves, three waves that were defined by the three sacks he performed on the vessels of Israel’s temple. In those temple desecrations, God fired three warning shots across the bow of the ship of Israel before He overturned the political throne of Israel, just as Ezekiel said He would.

 And to make His message *perfectly clear,* God even drew the Jews a picture. Did you ever hear anyone say, “Do I need to draw you a picture?” when they are trying to explain something to you? Well, that’s what God did for the Jews. He gave Ezekiel a picture in a vision, a vision he described by saying,

 ***“...the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub...*to the threshold of the house....*Then* the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, *and stood over the cherubims*...And the glory of the LORD went up...*and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city”* (Ezekiel 9:3; 10:18; 11:23).**

That vision illustrated how God’s glory left Israel in three stages. It pictured how each time Nebuchadnezzar took more of the vessels from Israel’s temple, a little more of God’s glory departed from Israel politically.

 And it departed from Israel *spiritually* a little more each time Paul told them he was turning to the Gentiles. In both cases God gave the Jews plenty of warning before turning things over to the Gentiles.

 Now the way the Jews *reacted* to Paul’s third warning here is different than the way they reacted to the first two, as we see when the next verse of our text says,

 **“And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves” (Acts 28:29).**

The Jews reacted to Paul’s final pronouncement that God was turning to the Gentiles by just *reasoning* amongst themselves. Compare that to who did the reasoning in the past:

 **“...they came to...a synagogue...And *Paul*...reasoned with them....he *reasoned* in the synagogue...And...entered into the synagogue, and *reasoned* with the Jews” (Acts 17:1,2; 18:4,19).**

During the thirty years covered by the Book of Acts, *Paul* was the only one doing any reasoning with the Jews out of their Scriptures. But now that God was through with the nation Israel, they began to reason amongst themselves. And I say that to point out that that’s what the Jews have been doing ever since. They’re no longer persecuting Paul’s message of Christ and His resurrection. They just reason amongst themselves as to whether Jesus just might have been their Messiah.

 And while *these* Jews were busy reasoning amongst themselves here, verse 30 says of Paul,

 **“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him” (Acts 28:30).**

Paul was under what we call “house arrest.” And if you were under house arrest in Roman times, you had to hire, or *rent,* your *own* house! I used to hear from a lot of prisoners who wrote me when I worked for Berean Bible Society, and a lot of them complained about the conditions in their prisons. But not one of them ever complained about having to pay rent!

 But now, history says that the Romans usually gave prisoners the same benefit we give them here in the United States in our own day, the benefit of a speedy trial. So here we have to ask why they let Paul rot in jail for two years before giving *him* his day in court?

 The answer *may* be found in what happened back in Acts 24, where we read,

 **“Felix...hoped...*that money should have been given him of Paul,* that he might loose him...*But after two years* Porcius Festus came into Felix' room...” (Acts 24:25-27).**

The Roman governor Felix left Paul in prison for two years soon after he was initially arrested because he hoped Paul would try to bribe his way out of incarceration. But that was only because Felix had heard that Paul had brought a *huge* amount of money to help the poor saints at Jerusalem.

 But now a year has passed, and I seriously doubt the rulers way over in Rome thought Paul still had enough money to bribe them, if they’d ever heard about his collection for those poor saints in the first place. No, I think the reason they kept him locked up for two years was because they were waiting for the Jews to show up in court so Paul could face his accusers. Do you remember what that Roman official said back in Acts 25:16?

 **“It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, *before...he...have the accusers face to face,* and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime.”**

The Romans wouldn’t try your case until your accusers showed up in court so you could face them.

 But it was the Jews in Jerusalem who had made those false charges that got Paul arrested, and a moment ago we saw that they no longer *cared* about Paul, now that he was out of their hair in Jerusalem. So they never *did* make the long, arduous trip to the capital of the Roman Empire to testify against the apostle. So the Romans finally let him go after two years.

 But during those two years, verse 30 says that Paul was able to receive all who came to visit him, and do what it says in the final verse of the Book of Acts:

 **“Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:31).**

Now here we have more proof of that Cold War with the Jews that I mentioned. Back during the *hot* war that Paul had with them, he wrote,

 **“...the Jews...both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us...*Forbidding us* to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved...” (I Thessalonians 2:14-16).**

 Earlier in Paul’s ministry the Jews were *always* forbidding him when he tried to preach Christ. But now that kind of militant persecution was a thing of the past.

 That’s why Paul was able to preach with all the “confidence” that verse 31 mentions he had in that hired house. That’s talking about the confidence he had that the Jews wouldn’t try to kill him to silence him.

 Now you could argue that the Jews *were* still trying to kill Paul, and he was confident they wouldn’t succeed because he was being guarded by a Roman soldier in that hired house. But back in Acts 23, he was guarded by *hundreds* of Roman soldiers *in a Roman castle,* and not in some flimsy hired house. But that didn’t keep the Jews from hatching a plot to kill him—a plot that would have succeeded if Paul’s nephew hadn’t heard of it and foiled it. Those unsaved Jews had sworn an oath they wouldn’t eat or drink until they had killed Paul, and even the Secret Service in charge of guarding our president will tell you that it is almost impossible to stop a man from doing something if he’s not afraid to die.

 So the only way Paul could have been *this* confident of his safety *in a rental property* was if the Jews had stopped trying to kill him, as the Cold War with the Jews was getting started here.

 Now don’t get me wrong. It’s still true of the Jews what Paul said of them when he wrote,

 **“As concerning the gospel, *they are enemies for your sakes...”* (Romans 11:28).**

Unsaved Jews are still our enemies, but you need to understand the *kind* of enemy they are. They’re not the kind who are out to kill us, so we should not be out to kill *them.* That’s not the definition of a Cold War! And it’s not the kind of warfare God wants us to be involved in with Jews, or with anyone else for that matter. Jews are your *doctrinal* enemy, not your *personal* enemy. And they’re not your *political* enemy either, despite what conspiracy theorists try to tell you. They’re always accusing the Jews of being behind things in nefarious ways.

 In closing, I remind you of how much things have changed in God’s program since the beginning of the Book of Acts to the end of Acts here in Acts 28. Back in the beginning of the book, Peter’s entire message at Pentecost consisted of accusing the Jews of his nation, as we see when Luke records his words here:

 ***“Ye men of Israel,* hear these words; Jesus of Naz-areth...*ye* have taken, and by wicked handshave crucified and slain...*ye* denied the Holy One...*and killed the Prince of life*...Be it known *unto...all the people of Israel*...Jesus Christ of Nazareth...*ye* crucified....and...slew and hanged on a tree” (Acts 2:22,23; 3:14,15; 4:10; 5:30).**

Peter’s whole ministry involved accusing his nation of crucifying their Messiah! But Paul said he had *nothing* to accuse his nation of. He didn’t go around telling the Jews, “You did it, and you need to *repent* of doing it,” as Peter did. Paul went around saying of the cross, as it were, *“God* did it. He did it for you, to pay for your sins.”

 And that’s been God’s message to the Jews ever since. It’s a message of *limitless grace.* It’s a message of no accusations of *anything.* And it’s God’s message to the Gentiles as well.

 It’s also the message of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, the next book we’ll be studying together. If you’re interested in learning all about the *mechanics* of your salvation, the nuts and bolts of how God was able to save you from your sins, I’d encourage you to study our next lessons closely, because an understanding of the mechanics of your salvation is the very *foundation* of your faith.

 It’s the foundation of life itself.