

Acts

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Translation

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes [as a result of regeneration], so that they turn away [conversion] from darkness to light [spiritual illumination through the gospel message] and away from the authority of Satan unto God [spiritual deliverance], so that they receive their remission of sins [forensic forgiveness] and a portion [inheritance] among those who have been sanctified [positionally] by faith which is in Me [Jesus Christ is the object of faith].

Introduction

Not studying Acts in detail at this time.

CHAPTER 1

LWB **Acts 26:18** To open their eyes [as a result of regeneration], so that they turn away [conversion] from darkness to light [spiritual illumination through the gospel message] and away from the authority of Satan unto God [spiritual deliverance], so that they receive their remission of sins [forensic forgiveness] and a portion [inheritance] among those who have been sanctified [positionally] by faith which is in Me [Jesus Christ is the object of faith].

^{KW} **Acts 26:18** To open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and out from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith which is in me.

^{KJV} **Acts 26:18** To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul was commissioned by God to preach the gospel to unbelievers and teach Bible doctrine to believers. The emphasis in this passage is on preaching the gospel to unbelievers (Festus, Agrippa, and others present), as opposed to John's message in his first epistle which is addressed to believers ("little children whose sins have been forgiven"). "Opening their eyes" is a reference to the doctrine of regeneration. This is a one-time event (Ingressive Aorist tense) that is the purpose for Paul's mission. Paul preaches the message of Christ for the *purpose* of opening eyes; the Holy Spirit opens spiritual eyes to the truth as a *result* of regeneration. Once their eyes are opened, the result will be that (a) they turn away from darkness and to light, (b) they turn away from the authority of Satan unto God, (c) they receive the forensic forgiveness of sins, and (d) they receive their portion or spiritual inheritance among those who have been sanctified.

The second and third infinitives in this passage (result) are subordinate to the first infinitive (purpose). The "light" represents spiritual illumination through the gospel message. "Darkness" is Satan's realm, often called *cosmos diabolicos*. Turning away from (Latin: conversion) Satan and to God is called *spiritual deliverance*. The forgiveness (Latin: remission) of sins is an element of justification, based on the atoning work of Christ on the cross. It is a one-time event. Most commentators refer to the "portion" as being the believer's inheritance. There is no element of "chance" in regeneration, conversion, forensic forgiveness of sins, or obtaining one's inheritance. "Faith" is not a nebulous, mystical faith in nothing, but faith in an object: Jesus Christ. Even the faith which is "in Me" is a gift from God. Salvation from beginning to end is entirely due to God's grace. All of the verbs are in the ingressive aorist tense, which means these events happened once (initially) during the salvation process.

The intensive perfect tense combined with the passive voice means that those who have been purified passively received this *positional sanctification* from God, not by any efforts of their own. They were recipients of God's sanctifying grace. Again, everything in this passage is related to Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus. His recounting of his conversion experience is evangelical, addressed to Festus and Agrippa - not pastoral, addressed to fellow believers. Every item mentioned is therefore *forensic*, not *familial*. The one-time *forensic* remission of sins restores God's *relationship* to the depraved sinner, but *familial* forgiveness is required for believers to have *fellowship* with Him. The basis of God's *relationship* with us is taken care of by one-time *forensic forgiveness* (Acts 26:18). The basis of our *fellowship* with God is taken care of by repeated *familial forgiveness* (1 John 1:9).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The recovery of the carnal Christian requires that he “repent” (2 Cor. 7:10; Rev. 2:5). Elsewhere this repentance is called confession (1 John 1:9). While some say that Christians do not need to confess, that God takes no notice of our sins because they are buried in the sea of forgetfulness, the Bible seems to speak otherwise. The Lord does not impute sin to us (Psalm 32:1-2; Rom. 4:7-8), but that refers to our eternal standing. (J. Dillow) These important words of Jesus to Paul give his justification to this cultured audience for his response to the command of Jesus. (A. Robertson) Special calling is in large measure the Holy Spirit’s work of illumination, enabling the recipient to understand the true meaning of the gospel. This working of the Spirit is necessary because the depravity which is characteristic of all humans prevents them from grasping God’s revealed truth. (M. Erickson) The mission of the church is not to regenerate people; she is to preach the gospel whereby those whose hearts have already been prepared in regeneration are made ready to embrace Christ through conversion. (W. Best) Daily forgiveness of those who are within the family of God is distinguished from the judicial and positional forgiveness which was applied forensically. (S. Hoyt) The work of opening the spiritual eyes of the people belongs to the Holy Spirit. (S. Kistemaker)

There are two kinds of forgiveness in the NT. One pertains to our eternal salvation (justification by faith), the other to our temporal fellowship with the Father. Just as our children may sin within our family, the believer may sin within God’s family. Our child is always our child, but until he confesses, our fellowship is not good. In God’s family the same principle applies. There is a forgiveness for salvation and a forgiveness for restoration. The Lord referred to this second kind of forgiveness when He said to Peter, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me” (John 13:8). Peter told the Lord to wash him all over if that was the case. To this Jesus replied, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean” (John 13:10). The forgiveness related to restoration of fellowship is parallel in thought with the cleansing of the feet of the already bathed, regenerate man ... To deny this is simply to deny that God holds us accountable for our behavior. (J. Dillow) Nicodemus was told that he had to be born again before he could see. Once the faculty of sight is given, the recipient is guided by the Word to repentance and faith ... Regeneration is the “cause” of an individual turning to the Lord; conversion is the regenerate person “actually” turning. (W. Best)

Paul, in taking himself that which is proper to God, does seem to exalt himself too high. For we know that it is the Holy Spirit alone which does lighten the eyes. We know that Christ is the only Redeemer which does deliver us from the tyranny of Satan. We know that it is God alone who, having put away our sins, does adopt us unto the inheritance of the saints. But this is a common thing, that God does translate unto his ministers that honor which is due to Himself alone, not that He may take any thing from Himself, but that He may commend that mighty working of His Spirit which He does show forth in them. For He does not send them to work, that they may be dead instruments, or, as it were, stage-players; but that He may work mightily by their hand. But it depends on the secret power of His Spirit that their preaching is effectual, who works all things in all

men, and which only gives the increase. (J. Calvin) These are the three aspects of God's forgiveness of sinners whom He has elected to salvation: (1) everlasting forgiveness, (2) restorative forgiveness, and (3) governmental forgiveness. Everlasting forgiveness occurs at regeneration. Restorative forgiveness is related to those who are everlastingly forgiven – every person saved by the grace of God needs continual cleansing. Governmental forgiveness is for the children of God who have sinned and been restored to fellowship. (W. Best)

The apostle John, in addressing his "little children" whose "sins are forgiven" (1 John 2:12), nevertheless told them that to be forgiven by God was conditioned upon confessing their sins (1 John 1:9). If we do not confess, we are not forgiven as far as temporal forgiveness is concerned. But as far as our eternal relationship and forgiveness is concerned, that is unchanging ... The sacrifice of Christ gives sacrificial protection from eternal forgiveness on the basis of faith and the permanent gift of regeneration and justification. But it does not give sacrificial protection to unconfessed temporal sin subsequent to our justification. Our eternal forgiveness depends upon Him, but our temporal forgiveness depends upon us ... Any sin is a barrier to *fellowship* but does not endanger our eternal *relationship*. (J. Dillow) Everlastingly forgiven persons still need restorative forgiveness. Although sinners are forgiven through justification, saints are forgiven through sanctification. Jesus Christ, the saint's Advocate, keeps them safe, and their confession of sins keeps them in fellowship. Because every Christian sins, every Christian requires continual sanctification. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes for the saints at the right hand of the Father. (W. Best)

Ministers are used as instruments in converting people, but not in regenerating them. It is striking to observe that in three NT passages (Luke 1:16, Acts 26:17-18, James 5:19-20), where conversion is used transitively of converting someone to God, the subject of the verb is not God but a preacher ... The conversion of men is to be the objective of ministers and churches, but we cannot be the instruments of conversion in people where there has been no work of God in regeneration. Therefore, our first plea is for the power of God in regeneration, and then for men to repent and believe ... No matter what the inherent power is of the gospel, it fails of any spiritual effect, unless the mind to which it is presented is in a fit state to receive it ... The word of the gospel is to effect conversion and practical sanctification, not regeneration ... The act of God in regeneration is followed by the act of man in conversion. There can never be an act of conversion unless there has already been a previous work of grace by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Conversion alters not the *position* but the *condition* of man ... The faculty (spiritual ability) of faith is implanted in regeneration. Regeneration of the soul, which includes the impartation of the faculty of faith, is required to be able to penetrate the human nature of Jesus Christ and behold the impeccable Person of the Divine Son of God. (W. Best)

In John 5:24 when we are assured that we will not come into judgment and yet in 2 Cor. 5:10 we do, the resolution is that John is referring to judgment with respect to one's eternal destiny and Paul is referring to the wages for work. John speaks of *forensic* justification, and Paul refers to *familial* forgiveness. John speaks of our escape from

retribution; Paul speaks of our rewards and punishments within the family of God. The satisfaction of Christ unconditionally and irrevocably covers the former, but only provisionally covers the latter. We must confess daily to obtain the benefits of having the atonement extended to forgive sin within the family of God ... When we become Christians, the Scriptures affirm that we enter into two different relationships with Christ. The first, Paul called being “in Christ.” This relationship is eternal and unchanging. It depends upon God alone and is received through faith on the basis of the justifying righteousness of Christ. The second relationship is often called “Christ in us,” and it refers not to our eternal relationship but to our temporal fellowship. This relationship with Christ is changeable and depends upon our responses in faith to His love and grace. (J. Dillow)

Acts 26:18 To open (ἀνοίγω, AAInf., Ingressive, Purpose) their (Poss. Gen.) eyes (Acc. Dir. Obj.), so that (demonstrative) they turn away (ἐπιστρέφω, AAInf., Ingressive, Result, Articular; be converted, reverse course) from darkness (Abl. Separation) to light (Prep. Acc.) and (connective) away from the authority (Abl. Separation) of Satan (Adv. Gen. Ref.) unto God (Acc. Dir. Obj.), so that (demonstrative) they receive (λαμβάνω, AAInf., Ingressive, Result, Articular) their (Poss. Gen.) remission (Adv. Acc.; forensic forgiveness) of sins (Abl. Separation) and (connective) a portion (Acc. Dir. Obj.; share, inheritance) among those (Dat. Assoc.; other elect believers) who have been sanctified (ἀγιάζω, Perf.PPtc.DMP, Intensive, Substantival; positionally, consecrated, purified) by faith (Instr. Means) which (Dat. Appos.) is (ellipsis) in Me (Prep. Acc.).

^{BGT} **Acts 26:18** ἀνοίξει ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτοῦς εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληροῖν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

^{VUL} **Acts 26:18** aperire oculos eorum ut convertantur a tenebris ad lucem et de potestate Satanae ad Deum ut accipiant remissionem peccatorum et sortem inter sanctos per fidem quae est in me

Resources

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