

Introduction

Introducing the Book of Acts

The prophets of old had foretold of the last days when the Christ would come into the world, establish the Lord's kingdom, and reign as king. Matthew seemed to be obsessed with the idea of the kingdom of God and its beginnings in the book that bears his name. Though Christ came into the world, as was prophesied, his kingdom had not been established at the point of his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven (see Acts 1:6ff). The book of Acts fills in all the details regarding God's promise to establish his kingdom and forgive man of their sins.

History revealed God's promises to mankind through his beloved Son Jesus Christ. The proof of Jesus being the Christ is overwhelming. When the gospel of Christ was preached some believed some disbelieved. Those who believed were added to the kingdom of God and through time God's kingdom grew larger and larger. Today the same kingdom and gospel continues to be presented to man and we are all left with the decision to accept or reject the Christ. Jesus summarized the contents of the book of Acts when he said, "*Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*" (Matthew 28:19-20). This article shall thereby examine the main object of Acts which is to illustrate that after the kingdom was established and the gospel preached to the world there were varying responses.

Proving that Jesus is the Christ

One universal fact among religious Jews was that they looked, searched, and longed for the day when Christ would come into the world and fulfill God's promises. The Apostle Paul, while giving a defense to king Agrippa, said that he was being accused of misdeeds by his enemies because of "*the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain*" (Acts 26:6-7). Though the Jews served God night and day in hopes of seeing the Christ they amazingly did not recognize him once he came into the world. Jesus did not meet their expectations of a king that would free them from Roman oppression (see Matt. 11:16-17; 13:57-58). Jesus astounded and offended them by identifying their sin and demanding repentance (Matt. 15:12; Jn. 7:7). These Jews knew that accepting Jesus as the Christ meant giving up their worldly ambitions and they had no desire to do so (Jn. 12:37ff). Jesus (Matt. 21:42) and Peter (Acts 4:11) quote from Psalms 118:22 to illustrate that God had always known that many would reject the Christ.

All who reject Christ must know that they reject the most glaring facts revealed by the prophets and fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Acts 28:23). Every prophecy ever written about the Messiah in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the man Jesus Christ (see Acts 3:24ff; 13:29-33; 26:21-33). Not only did the birth, life, death, and burial prove Jesus to be the Christ but there were many witnesses of his resurrection from the dead (see Acts 2:31-32; I Cor. 15:6). To reject Jesus was and is to reject the obvious (Acts 28:23-28)!

Consider these varying responses to the Gospel Message

When the gospel was preached there were varying responses. Some mocked (Acts 2:12-13; 17:32) while others showed a genuine interest (Acts 2:12-13; 13:42-43) in the message of salvation. The gospel caused some to be sore troubled (Acts 4:2) and jealous (Acts 13:45). The consequences of the gospel message upon the messenger often had horrid results too. Stephen was murdered because of his preaching (Acts 7:54-56). Paul was imprisoned for five years (two years in Caesarea and three years while traveling to Rome and in Rome as a prisoner). One thing that rises out of the depths of rejection, jealousy, murder, and people being sore troubled over the gospel message was that no matter how angry the gospel caused some it's progress would in no way be impeded (see Acts 26:14).

Many heard the gospel and did "*believe*" (see Acts 4:4; 8:12; 13:48; 17:34; 18:8). When the Philippian jailor asked Paul what he needed to do to be saved Paul answered saying, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house*" (Acts 16:31) and so he did. What is fascinating about the book of Acts is that it sets out early to document the requirements of salvation. Acts 2:38 stands as a thesis statement of the book in relation to

salvation. Men heard, believed, confessed, repented, were baptized, and encouraged to live faithfully all the days of their lives. Each case of conversion, after the initial sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2, must take into account the words of Peter. The book of Acts proves that “believing” is more than just making a mental decision to accept that Jesus is the Christ. Believing involves the hearing, confessing, repenting, being baptized, and purposing to live faithfully. The Apostle Paul, while preaching to those of Antioch, connects “*belief*” with “*justification and the forgiveness of sins*” (see Acts 13:38-39). To believe is thereby to be justified of sins. Man is justified, According to Peter’s sermon, by being baptized into Christ.

The book of Acts is a clear and concise work that exposes the reality of Christ, the existence of the kingdom of God (the church), and detailed instructions regarding what one must do to be added to this kingdom. Some accepted the gospel message and the terms of admission into the kingdom of God but many did not. Though majority of people throughout history, including today, reject Christ his kingdom continues to grow. How will you respond to the gospel message of salvation?

Author of the book of Acts

The author of the book of Acts is Luke. The introduction of Acts and the book of Luke help us to determine the author of Acts. Both the books of Luke and Acts are addressed to the “*most excellent Theophilus.*” The name “*Theophilus*” means “lover of God.” Nothing is known about this individual but an individual he is. Paul’s address to both Felix (Acts 23:26; 24:3) and Festus (Acts 26:25) prove that Theophilus is a person, not a general “lover of God.” Additionally, Luke uses the first person pronoun “*we*” in Acts 16 which is further proof of his authorship.

Dates in the Book of Acts

| Established Dates in the Book of Acts | | |
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| (These Established Dates help us determine dates for four tours of preaching and Epistles written to various Churches) | | |
| Date | Scripture Reference | Event |
| 33 AD | Acts 2:1ff | Day of Pentecost (Fifty days after Christ crucifixion) |
| 41 - 54 AD | Acts 11:27-28 | Days of Claudius (4th Roman Emperor) |
| 41 - 44 AD | Acts 12:1-2 | Herod Agrippa is King of Judea |
| 51 AD | Acts 18:1-2 | Claudius expels Jews from Rome |
| 52 AD | Acts 18:12 | Gallio - Proconsul of Achaia |
| 52 - 60 AD | Acts 23:22-24 | Felix Governor of Palestine |
| 60 - 62 AD | Acts 24:27 | Festus Governor of Palestine |
| 54 - 68 AD | Acts 25:11-12 | Nero Claudius Caesar is Emperor of Rome |

Chapter 1

Date (30) 33 AD

I. Jesus Charges the Apostles to Preach the gospel of Repentance and Remission of Sins through the Power of the Holy Spirit (1:1-5):

- A. *“The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach”* (1:1).
1. The pronoun “*T*” is none other than Luke (see Acts 16:8ff).
 2. Luke had made a former “*treatise*” (*logos*) = “the word or that by which the inward thought is expressed... that which is said or spoken, words, language” (LS 477). Luke had formerly spoken words to Theophilus “*concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach.*” These former words are recorded in the book of Luke (see Luke 1:1-3). Nothing is known of the man Theophilus other than the fact that his name means “lover of God.”
 3. The book of Acts is a continuation of historical events after the death of Christ. To this point, Theophilus had only the account of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ before him. Luke is further explaining the events of revelation, fulfilled prophecy, and the affects of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to Theophilus.
- B. *“until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me:”* (1:2-4).
1. There are two points of importance in these three verses. **First**, Luke reveals what took place after Jesus was resurrected from the dead and before he ascended into the heavens to be with the Father. Luke tells Theophilus that for the space of forty days Jesus appeared unto the apostles in the resurrected form (and many others / see I Cor. 15:3ff). Though Jesus was crucified he “*showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs.*” The word “*passion*” (Gr. *pascho*) = “to suffer, be ill treated” (LS 612)... “to suffer, endure evil, to suffer death” (Moulton 312). After Christ suffering upon the cross he was resurrected from the dead. During this forty day period Jesus taught the apostles about the “*kingdom of God.*” While Jesus was alive he taught the disciples much concerning the kingdom of God as well (see study # 1; The Kingdom of God):
 - a. The kingdom of God is identified as the church of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 16:16-18 and II Thessalonians 1:4-5). The church would be a collective body of people who had heard the gospel preached, obeyed it, received the forgiveness of their sins through baptism, and endeavoring to live a godly life with the hope of heaven ever before their mind. The book of Acts records the growth of this body of believers (see Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:11 etc.).
 - b. Jesus taught that the kingdom was so near to being established that some currently living would experience it (see Matt. 16:28; Mk. 9:1).
 - c. The Old Testament prophets foretold of God’s kingdom being established in the “*latter days*” (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:28).
 - d. These latter days had now come! We will examine this subject closer in Acts 2.
 2. **Secondly**, Luke reveals the Lord’s commandment given to the apostles “*through the Holy Spirit.*” Jesus “*commanded and charged*” the disciples not to leave the city of Jerusalem until they had received the “*promise of the Father.*” This charge is recorded by Luke at Luke 24:44-49.
 - a. Jesus told the apostles that he fulfilled all Messianic prophecies written in the Law of Moses and the prophets (Lk. 24:44). One such primary prophecy was given by Isaiah. Isaiah foretold of Christ suffering and bearing the sins of many (Isa. 53).
 - b. The function of Christ’s passion, man’s forgiveness, was to begin being “*preached*” from Jerusalem some time after his death and extend into the whole world (Lk. 24:47).
 - c. The apostles would be the messengers of “*repentance and the remission of sins*” and thereby be “*sent forth with the promise of my Father upon you*” (Lk. 24:49b). The “*promise of my Father*” is clearly the forgiveness of sins (see Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:8, 14, 16) (see study # 2; God’s Promise to Man).

- d. The apostles were charged by Jesus not to depart from Jerusalem because it would be here that prophecy was fulfilled in relation to man's forgiveness.
 - e. Luke tells the apostles that they would be "*clothed with power from on high*" (Lk. 24:49b). **The clothing with power would be associated with the preaching of repentance and remission of sins.**
- C. "*for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence*" (1:5).
1. Luke now reveals what being "*clothed with power from on high*" is. The power that the apostles would receive would be in the form of being "*baptized in the Holy Spirit.*" Holy Spirit baptism is equated to being "*clothed with power from on high.*" While John baptized men in water for faith and repentance of sins (see Acts 19:3-5) the apostles' baptism would be to receive "*power from on high.*"
 2. Notice that the antecedent to the pronoun "*ye*" is the apostles (see Acts 1:2-5). The apostles would receive the **promise** of God, being clothed with power from on high, so that they may preach repentance and the remission of sins [the general promise to all humanity] (see Lk. 24:47-49). This promise is now referred to as being "*baptized in the Holy Spirit.*" This baptism would occur "*not many days hence.*" Let us note the facts:
 - a. Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected from the dead. He appeared for the space of forty days teaching the apostles about the kingdom of God. Jesus had said that the kingdom of God would be established during the lifetime of this generation (Mk. 9:1). There is an obvious connection between the apostles teaching repentance and remission of sins, the kingdom of God, and their being baptized in the Holy Spirit (see Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-5).
 - b. It is obvious that the apostle's baptism in the Holy Spirit would signify the beginnings of the kingdom of God on earth (i.e., His church). At this point man would have the opportunity to receive the remission of sins through baptism in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38).
 3. Understanding Holy Spirit baptism (see study # 3; Holy Spirit Baptism):
 - a. Holy Spirit baptism was promised to the apostles here at Acts 1:5.
 - b. Holy Spirit baptism is associated with the Father's promise to forgive man of their sins through the preaching of the gospel (Acts 1:4; Lk. 24:47).
 - c. Note that Peter refers to Holy Spirit baptism as a "*gift*" from God (Acts 11:15-17). The Acts 11 passage is a key to understanding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Baptism of the Holy Spirit and baptism for the remission of sins are two different things. The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism was so that man may receive "*the like gift*" (i.e., miraculous abilities) (see Acts 1:8; 2:4; 19:1-7). Though some say that Holy Spirit baptism was only for the apostles I disagree. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us that Holy Spirit baptism would be for many in these early days of the church (see Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Acts 11:15). These same four verses are made in the same context as the Acts 1:5 passage. It is clear that the apostles were the first to be immersed in the Holy Spirit and as they laid their hands on others they too were immersed in the Holy Spirit (see Acts 8:18; 19:6). When people were immersed in the Holy Spirit they were enabled with power to perform miracles for the purpose of preaching and confirming the truth of divine revelation (see Acts 8:13).
 - d. Miraculous gifts thereby served a two fold purpose: First, Gifts enabled men to speak the inspired word of God to the whole creation without having prior knowledge of it (see I Cor. 12-14; Gal. 1:11-12; Eph. 3:5ff; II Pet. 1:19-21). Secondly, gifts would confirm the word of God as being valid and true (cf. Mk. 16:20; Acts 1:8; Heb. 2:3). When the completed word of God was revealed there was no more need for gifts (i.e., people being baptized in the Holy Spirit) (see I Cor. 13:8-10). The apostle Peter said, "*seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lusts*" (II Pet. 1:3-4).
 - e. The conclusion is simple. Baptism in the Holy Spirit occurred in the lives of many first century Christians that they may confirm divine revelation as truth through miraculous

powers of the Holy Spirit. Once divine revelation was complete and man was thoroughly furnished for every good work unto salvation there was no more need for Holy Spirit baptism (see II Tim. 3:16-17). This is why Paul tells us that there is only one baptism at Eph. 4:1ff. That one baptism is baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), the baptism of Moses (I Cor. 10:1ff) and the baptism of John (Matt. 3:1-6; Acts 19:3-7) have all served their purpose and are done away with. Those who claim Holy Spirit baptism today claim to have the power to perform miracles. Seeing divine revelation on this matter helps us to expose their false ways.

f. Through this chapter and chapter 2 we shall compile evidences to support these conclusions.

II. The Apostles asks Jesus a question about the Kingdom of God (1:6-11):

A. *“They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* (1:6).

1. The apostles had God’s Kingdom squarely upon their minds. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God over a space of forty days while with them. The apostles had previously asked about a restoration of the kingdom of God at Matthew 17. Jesus answered them saying, *“Elijah indeed comes, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not...”* (Matt. 17:11-12). Apparently, at this late date, the apostles continued have faulty ideas about the nature of the kingdom of God. The apostles, like many others, viewed God’s kingdom as a physical one that would restore Israel’s former glory as in the days of David (see also Matt. 11:12-19; 18:1; 20:11-16).
2. The power that they would receive, through Holy Spirit baptism, prompted them to ask this question. Jesus has clearly associated this power with preaching to this point (Lk. 24:47).

B. *“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority”* (1:7).

1. Jesus does not attempt to correct their misconceived ideas about the nature of God’s kingdom but rather he leaves that up to the time that they will be immersed in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.
2. God’s plans are his plans. The Lord has given the facts and the outcome of those future events are in his hands alone (see the example of Matt. 24:36 in relation to the end of all things).

C. *“But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”* (1:8).

1. Jesus, in the resurrected state, had appeared to the apostles over a forty day period teaching them about the **kingdom of God** (Acts 1:3). God’s kingdom has not yet been established (see Acts 1:6). The kingdom has been identified as the church (Matthew 16:16-18; I Thess. 2:12; II Thessalonians 1:4-5). Jesus reveals the signal rather than the exact time in which the church would be established. **When the apostles received “power” (i.e., Holy Spirit baptism) the church or kingdom of God would be restored or established (see Mark 9:1) (see study # 1):**
 - a. The apostles were to thereby faithfully wait in Jerusalem until the Father decided it was the right time for this event to occur.
 - b. The power they would receive through Holy Spirit baptism would enable them to remember all that Jesus had taught them (cf. Jn. 14:26) and thereby they would be guided in all truth (Jn. 15:26ff). Not only would they be endowed with divine revelation but they would also be able to perform miracles to confirm the divine words they spoke (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4).
2. Once the kingdom is established the apostles would be witnesses of Jesus and go throughout the world preaching repentance and remission of sins (see Luke 24:47-49 again).

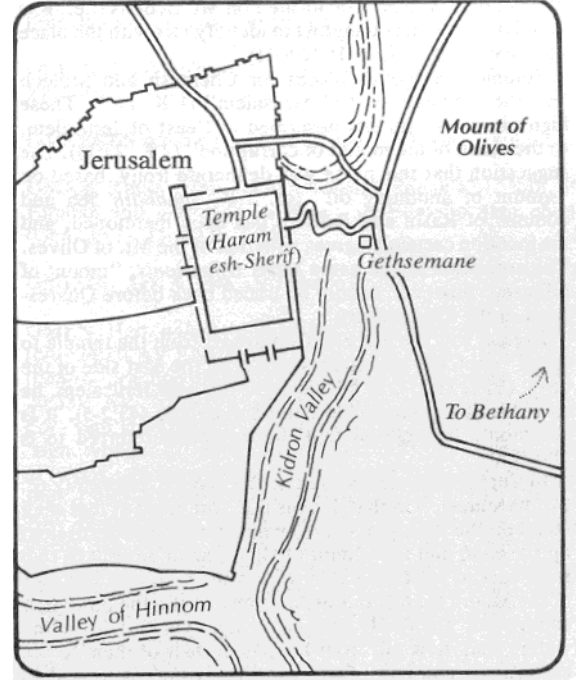
D. *“And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven”* (1:9-11).

1. The ascension of Jesus is here recorded as in Luke 24:50-53. Luke tells us that Jesus blessed them and then parted from them being *“carried up into heaven.”*

2. Jesus was taken into heaven to begin his reign as king of his kingdom (see Jn. 18:36-38). At this time two angels appear to the apostles. These two angels comfort the apostles by revealing to them that Jesus will one day come again in the clouds as they have seen him leave in the clouds. This is a reference to the second coming of Jesus (see Matt. 25:31; I Thess. 4:13ff; II Pet. 3:10ff) (see study # 4; The Second Coming of Jesus).

III. The Apostles tarry in Jerusalem as Jesus Commanded (1:12-20):

- A. *“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey off”* (1:12).
 1. The Mount of Olives (mount called Olivet) is located due east of Jerusalem *“a Sabbath day’s journey”* (see map [ISBE V. 3, pp. 589]). Jesus had previously been here with his apostles as recorded at Matthew 21:1ff; 24:1ff; and 26:30.
 2. We find that the apostles were with Jesus in the resurrected state at the Mount of Olives before the Lord’s ascension into heaven.
- B. *“And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son (or brother) of James”* (1:13).
 1. Eleven of the apostles are named as being present. Judas had hung himself to death earlier.
 2. They have assembled in the city of Jerusalem in an upper chamber of a rented house or inn.
- C. *“These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren”* (1:14).
 1. The day of Pentecost would have been fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus (we will see this at Acts 2). Jesus had appeared to the apostles over a period of forty days before his ascension into heaven (Acts 1:3). The days in which they were *“all with one accord continuing in prayer”* would be the 10 days before Pentecost.
 2. The Lord’s mother and other women were there with the apostles praying together and awaiting the immersion of the Holy Spirit as Jesus had promised.
- D. *“And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty), Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry”* (1:15-17).
 1. The Apostle Peter seems to be the early spokesman for all the apostles. Peter stands before the gathered one hundred and twenty people and reminds them of the prophecy regarding Judas (the missing apostle).
 2. The Holy Spirit moved David to write about Judas hundreds of years before he would come to this world (see study # 5; Divine Inspiration).
 3. Judas was a thief who stole money from the apostle’s treasury (Jn. 12:6). He was also the one who ultimately betrayed the Lord (Matt. 26:14-16, 47-50).
- E. *“(Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is, the field of blood.)”* (1:18-19).
 1. Judas was given thirty pieces of silver for betraying the Lord (Matt. 27:3). He tried to return the money to the chief priest and elders yet they refused it. Judas cast the money on the floor of the



- “sanctuary” and hanged him-self (Matt. 27:5). The chief priests would not take the money back due to it being the “*price of blood*” and thereby bought the “*potter’s field to bury strangers in*” (see Matt. 27:3-8).
2. Evidently Judas hung so long on the rope that it broke and his rotted body exploded on the ground when it hit (Acts 1:18).
- F. “*For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His office let another take*” (1:20-21).
1. Peter quotes from Psalms 69:25 regarding the desolate dwelling place of his death.
 2. Secondly, Peter quotes from Psalms 109:8 regarding the fact that Judas’ office as apostle must be replaced.

IV. Judas’ office as an apostle is Replaced (1:21-26):

- A. “*Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection*” (1:21-22).
1. Peter makes the stipulations for an individual who will replace Judas as an apostle of Jesus Christ.
 2. First, the one under consideration must be a man. Secondly, this man must have been in the company with the other eleven apostles and witnessed the teachings and works of Jesus from the time of “*the baptism of John*” until the day when Jesus ascended into heaven. Thirdly, this man must have necessarily seen Jesus in both the living flesh and living in the resurrected state.
- B. “*And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place. And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles*” (1:23-25).
1. Two men are brought forward (men who had seen, heard, and witnessed the life of Jesus and his resurrection). The two men are Joseph called Barsabbas and Matthias.
 2. The apostles prayed to God about the matter stating that God is the only one who “*knowest the hearts of all men.*” We are not told whether these two individuals are the only ones who met the above criteria. It may have been that they were the two best reputable men available. We are told that God would make his decision between the two based not only upon the criteria that had to be met but what was in their hearts. When the lots were cast they fell upon Matthias signifying that he was God’s choice to replace Judas.

Chapter 2 33 AD

I. Immersion of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles in Jerusalem on Pentecost (2:1-4):

- A. “*And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place*” (2:1).
1. The “*Day of Pentecost*” (**feast of weeks [Ex. 34:22] or feast of harvest [Ex. 23:16]**) was the second annual feast of the year wherein all male Jews were required by law to attend sacrifices and a holy convocation at the temple (see Ex. 23:17). Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the **Passover** feast (feast of unleavened bread [see Lk. 22:1]) which occurred on the tenth day of Abib (the first month of the Hebrew calendar) (Ex. 12:1ff; Lev. 23:4-6, 15-16). The 50 days after Passover is a time of harvest. God’s people were not to harvest the corners of their fields nor gather fruit that had dropped from the trees but rather leave those areas for the poor. The people of God were to begin the season of Pentecost with a wave offering of the first-fruits of the land to indicate their thankfulness for the harvest. They were to offer up a burnt-offering, meal-offering, and a drink-offering. **At the end of the 50 days they were to have a holy convocation** in which no work was to be done. They would then offer a meal offering, burnt-offerings, drink offerings, sin offerings, peace offerings, and a wave offering. The fiftieth day after the Passover was to be a day of holy convocation. It was on this day that the apostles had gathered in Jerusalem, as the

Lord had commanded, and were awaiting the promise of power from the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:4, 8).

2. We know that Christ died on the Passover day (see Matthew 26:2). We know that after he was crucified that he arose from the grave after three days (Mk. 8:31; Lk. 24:46). The Lord appeared to his disciples over a period of 40 days teaching them about the coming Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). This would leave only a few days that the apostles tarried in Jerusalem awaiting the promise of Holy Spirit baptism given at Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4-5. If Christ was crucified on the Passover (i.e., 14th of Abib, raised from the dead the third day (17th of Abib [during the Feast of Unleavened Bread]), appeared to the disciples in the resurrected state for forty days (Acts 1:4-5) then this would have left only seven days (one full week) that the apostles were tarrying in Jerusalem after their conversation with the Lord in the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12).
- B. *“And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (2:2-4).
1. Let us recall that Jesus had promised that the Kingdom of God would be established when the apostles would *“receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you”* (Acts 1:8). Luke tells us that the Lord termed this event being *“clothed with power from on high”* (Lk. 24:49). Luke clearly terms this event at Acts 1:5 as being *“baptized in the Holy Spirit.”*
 2. The fulfillment of this promise is now being realized. The apostles are now *“filled with the Holy Spirit”* (a term that is equivalent to *“baptism of the Holy Spirit, having the Holy Spirit come upon you, and being clothed with power”*).
 3. The *“power”* given through Holy Spirit baptism was their ability to *“speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* The word *“tongue”* just simply means a “language” (LS 166). The apostles were now endowed with the miraculous ability to speak in languages that they had no previous knowledge of. Divine revelation was now being delivered by the apostles in the form of **preaching** just as Jesus had predicted (see Lk. 24:47). Jesus had earlier foretold of the Holy Spirit’s part in miraculously causing the apostles to remember (Jn. 14:26) and be guided in all truth (Jn. 15:26ff).

II. The Public Reaction to the Miracle they have Witnessed (2:5-13):

- A. *“Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language”* (2:5-6).
1. During the Feast of Pentecost there would be multitudes of devout Jews who had come to the city to participate in the annual holy convocation (see Ex. 23:17). These multitudes heard this mighty noise that sounded like a rushing wind and came to its source (the place where the apostles stood). The noise of the wind served the divine purpose of gathering an audience to witness the miraculous tongue speaking by the apostles.
 2. The word of God states that the multitudes were *“confounded”* (*sugcheo*) – “perplexed and amazed” (Moulton 380). These Jews were amazed *“because that every man heard them speaking in his own language.”* At this late date the Jews did not universally speak the Hebrew language anymore. They had been assimilated into nations the world over and had learned the language of the Greeks, Babylonians, and so forth (see below).
- B. *“And they were all amazed and marveled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God”* (2:7-11).
1. The source of the Jews and proselytes amazement was the fact that the apostles (Galileans) were speaking a *“language”* that they had no previous knowledge of.
 2. Several different languages were being spoken by the apostles. The words that were being spoken were not gibberish but rather words that revealed the *“mighty works of God.”*

- C. *“And they were all **amazed**, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine”* (2:12-13).
1. There were two classes of people in the audience. One class of people was *“amazed”* at the event. These amazed men want to know *“what meaneth this?”* Surely this miraculous event means something important in the scheme of divine things. These people were interested in spiritual things.
 2. Another class of men were those who *“mocked saying, They are filled with new wine.”* This second group of witnesses rejected the event as a divine miracle and chalked it up to the apostles being *“filled with new wine.”* The term *“new wine”* (*gleukos*) = “the unfermented juice of grapes, must; hence, sweet new wine, Acts 2:13” (Moulton 80). “Sweet, delightful... of water, sweet, fresh” (LS 166). The word *glukos* simply means “sweet and fresh.” That which is under consideration is determined by context. The sweet and fresh substance that the apostles are being *“filled with”* is that which has caused them to become *“drunken”* (Acts 2:15). With great ignorance this second skeptical group of men have adopted the most unreasonable explanation of why or how the apostles were able to speak in languages that were not their own. They must be drunk.
 3. Throughout history mankind has found himself in one of two similar states of mind in relation to spiritual matters. Truth is preached and some are interested and others mock and turn their heads away as though the message were nonsense (see Acts 2:37, 41) (see study # 6; How Do People Receive the Gospel?).

III. Peter’s Pentecost Sermon (2:14-42):

- A. *“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them saying, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day;”* (2:14-15).
1. Once again Peter stands up as the spokesman among the apostles (see Acts 1:15).
 2. Peter tells the multitude that the source of their divine abilities is not to be credited to drunkenness due to it being *“the third hour of the day.”* The third hour of the day would be the equivalent of our 9:00 AM. Those who are drunk are drunk at night not at 9:00 AM (see I Thess. 5:7).
- B. *“but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:”* (2:16).
1. Many of the people gathered together have asked, *“what meaneth this?”* (Acts 1:12) Peter now gives them their answer... **“This is that...”**
 2. Peter quotes from Joel 2:28ff. Joel’s prophecy revealed the coming of the kingdom of God and consequential forgiveness of man’s sins. All OT prophecy and the words of Jesus regarding the kingdom of God were now being fulfilled. Jesus had told the multitudes that his Kingdom would be established during the lifetime of many who belonged to this current generation (Matt. 16:28; Mk. 9:1).
 3. All parts of OT prophecy were now in place (see study # 9; The Church in Prophecy):
 - a. The longed for **Messiah** had come in the flesh (Matt. 1:18-25). Jesus would rule on the throne of David in God’s kingdom (II Sam. 7:12-17; Isa. 9:6-7; Ps. 16:8ff; Matt. 1:1; 21:9; Lk. 1:30-33; Acts 2:29ff; 13:22-23). The Lord preached the message of this kingdom (Matt. 4:17), was crucified that man would have the opportunity of being forgiven of sins (Isa. 53; Jer. 31:31ff), and now reigns as king of his kingdom (Zech. 9:9; Col. 1:13; Matt. 21:4-5; Jn. 18:36-37).
 - b. God’s kingdom was prophesied as being established during the *“latter days”* (Isa. 2:2-3; Joel. 2:28; Dan. 2:28).
 - c. The prophets foretold of God’s Kingdom being established during the days of the **Roman Empire** (Dan. 2:43-45; 11:38-40). While Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost the Roman Empire was in power (see Lk. 3:1-2; Acts 18:1-2).
 - d. Another mark of the beginnings of God’s kingdom would be that **God’s new covenant law would go forth from Jerusalem** (Isa. 2:2ff; Lk. 24:46-49). This new law was to take precedence over the Mosaic Law (Dan. 9:27-31). God’s new covenant law would offer the forgiveness of man’s sins (Jer. 31:31ff). When the law of the forgiveness of sins goes forth from Jerusalem man would know that the kingdom of God (i.e., the church) had been established. Note that Peter is now standing and telling the multitudes that this is what they are

now witnessing; i.e., the establishment of the kingdom of God right here and right now (see study # 10; The Establishment of the Church)!

- e. Lastly, the world would know that the kingdom of God had been established because this would be a day when not only all these other things previously spoken of had occurred (i.e., the coming of the Messiah, the latter days (i.e., the days when Rome was in power), and the law of the forgiveness of man's sins going forth from Jerusalem) but that the world may witness the **power of God** (see Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8).
- C. *“And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:”* (2:17).
1. Peter reveals that what the people are witnessing is the very thing that Joel prophesied about 600 years before this very day of Pentecost. Peter was living and preaching in these prophesied *“last days.”* Joel is known as the “doom and gloom” prophet. The people of God were in sin and were thereby suffering at the hands of the “great army.” Their suffering was not; however, done without a message of hope. Joel foretells of a day when those who would give heed to God's call would be saved from the consequences of their sins. Peter quotes now from Joel 2:28-32.
 2. The *“last days”* (or latter days – see Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:28) had now come. God has poured out His Holy Spirit upon the apostles and will continue to do so *“upon all flesh”* in the form of divine revelation that would be confirmed as truth through the miracles that followed them. Without partiality God would use male, female, young, old, slave, and free to distribute His message. Those immersed in the Holy Spirit would have this power.
 3. The author of Hebrews tells us that God communicated His message to man in *“divers manners”* (Heb. 1:1). God **spoke directly** to some prophets (Gen. 12:1ff; Ex. 12:1ff. etc.). God *“moved”* (II Pet. 1:21) some men to speak divine truths by the **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit *“entered into”* (Ezek. 2:1-2) and *“fell upon”* (Ezek. 11:5) the apostles and prophets in times past. Jesus said to his apostles, *“when the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come”* (Jn. 16:8ff). Nehemiah records, *“yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testified against them by thy Spirit through thy prophets”* (Neh. 9:30 / cf. Ezek. 1:3; 11:4-7).
 4. Others received **“visions”** and **“dreams”** from God to speak a divine message to the people (cf. Dan. 7:1; Obed. 1:1; Joel 2:28ff). These men, that were moved by God to speak, **confirmed** their words as being of divine origin by the signs and wonders they performed (cf. Mk. 16:20; Jn. 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:2-4) (see study # 5; Divine Inspiration).
- D. *“Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, Before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day”* (2:18-20).
1. Note the association between *“pouring forth my Spirit”* and *“prophecy, wonders, and signs.”* This would be the *“like gift”* of Acts 11:17). While it was only the apostles who received Holy Spirit baptism in Acts two we know that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon many others. God would *“pour forth of my Spirit”* by means of the apostles laying their hands upon others (see Acts 8:14-17). Baptism of the Holy Spirit did not; therefore, occur simply because one was baptized into Christ. To have the ability to perform the power of God through miracles would only occur through the apostles' laying on of hands (see also Acts 19:1-7). The great miracles that the prophets and other inspired people did produced wonder (awe) within the minds of the witnesses (see study # 3).
 2. These days; however, would see unrepentant sinners just as there were during the days of Joel. Due to their hardened hearts God would bring blood upon them in judgment against their wicked deeds. These *“mock”* at the words of divine revelation rather than being humbled (see Acts 2:13). To such wicked men will wait the *“day of the Lord.”* The *“day of the Lord”* is used throughout the scriptures to illustrate a day of calamity and judgment (see Isa. 13:9-11; Ezek. 30:3; II Cor. 1:14; I Thess. 5:2). Judgment of doom awaits the un-repenting sinner.

- E. *“And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (2:21).
1. Clearly the salvation is from the consequences of sin rather than the destruction of Jerusalem. No doubt Joel has the final judgment in mind when speaking of a dark sun and bloody moon.
 2. Paul was told by Ananias to be baptized so that his sins might be washed away and then he was instructed to *“call upon the name”* of Jesus (see Acts 22:16). The idea of *“calling upon the name of God”* is to “invoke” or “appeal” to the name of God for spiritual help (LS 292) (see study # 7; Calling upon the Name of God). This *“calling”* and being *“saved”* are inseparably connected.
 3. The following verses are examples of men calling upon the name of Jehovah (Ps. 3:1ff; Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Rom. 10:12-13; I Cor. 1:2; II Tim. 2:22). God calls upon men and women to be saved through the gospel message (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14). Man calls upon God by **appealing to Him for help** in his time of needing forgiveness for sins.
 4. Note that Joel continues at verse 33 (Peter does not quote this far) saying, *“for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call.”* Salvation is found at *“mount Zion and in Jerusalem.”* Mount Zion is where the law of forgiveness would go forth (cf. Isa. 2:3). Those who come to Mount Zion through hearing and responding to the call of the gospel message have entered into the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 12:21ff) and forgiven of sins. The forgiveness of sins is what brings *“escape”* of eternal condemnation and *“salvation”* (see study # ; What must I do to be Saved?).
- F. *“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay:”* (2:22-23).
1. Peter is moving in a divine and methodical method. The minds of his audience must first recognize that the true Messiah has come into the world and that His kingdom was being established at this very moment. Peter has quoted from the prophet Joel who foretold of this day yet also spoke of man’s disposition toward God. Joel had said that man was to call upon God for help due to their sin. Man’s heart must be moved to do such a thing by realizing the sin in their lives else they will forever face condemnation. Joel had earlier commanded that man, *“turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God;”* (Joel 2:12). Man needed more than an outward show of their faith. Man’s true heart feelings were to be that of devastation in relation to their sins they had committed. To move the Pentecost crowd to a point of devastated hearts where they would be moved to call upon the name of God for help against the onslaught of sin in their lives Peter reveals their deepest darkest sin; i.e., they were guilty of killing *“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs...”* (see study # 11; Methods of Preaching the Gospel).
 2. This dastardly deed was not done without purpose. God used their hard hearts to accomplish His eternal plan to save man from their sins. The crucifixion of Christ was thereby done voluntarily that man would have the opportunity to be saved from the consequences of sin. Said event was all by the *“foreknowledge of God”* because he loves His creation and is not willing that any should perish (II Pet. 3:9). God knew, before the foundation of the world, about his use of sinful men to accomplish his eternal goal of salvation (I Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:3ff) (see study # 12; Foreordination (predestination) of God).
 3. Note that the *“lawless hands”* that killed Jesus were the Romans who knew not the Mosaic Law. The Jews, by way of the Romans, were guilty of killing Jesus (this was their sin). God accomplished His eternal goal at the hands of sinners (just like He did with the Egyptians of the book of Exodus).
- G. *“Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David saith concerning him, I beheld the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy one to see corruption. Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance”* (2:24-28).

1. Though the hands of lawless and ignorant men were responsible for killing the Messiah upon the cross they could not hold him in death. God raised him from the dead! Such a statement by Peter in the hearing of the multitude who had just days previously been a part of the slaying of Christ on the cross must have horrified them. Their world of sin had to crash so hard upon their minds that they were in a state of disparity that only the sinner whose true faith in God can experience when in the wrong and exposed. To know that I am guilty of actually killing the one the OT foretold of saving my soul into eternity would be too much to bear. To further know that this Jesus, whom I killed, has been resurrected would both terrify and give me hope. One would think that my reply would be, "I am so sorry, please, please forgive me."
 2. Peter quotes from the Psalms to prove that the Christ had been resurrected and ascended into the heavens just as the Lord had predicted (see Jn. 2:19) (see study # 13; The Resurrection of Christ):
 - a. Peter first quotes from Psalms 16:8ff. Though David is writing in first person (i.e., as though it is he talking) it is clear that this is prophecy regarding Christ (see Acts 2:31).
 - b. Jesus knew that the Father would not leave him in Hades nor experience corruption of decay. The word "*Hades*" is used at Matt. 11:23-24 and Luke 16:23 to indicate a place of torment for the souls of the wicked. The word Hades is also used to describe the place for disembodied souls of the righteous (Acts 2:27-31). "*Hades*" (*hades*) = "The invisible abode or mansion of the dead; the place of punishment, hell; the lowest place or condition" (Moulton 6). Context determines whether one is speaking of the place of torments or place of comfort for the dead. The King James Version Bible incorrectly translates the Greek *hades* to English "*hell*." Jesus did not go to hell (the place of fire and eternal destruction / see II Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:14) but rather a place of disembodied souls (i.e., the place where the spirits of righteous dead men go).
- H. "*Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne;*" (2:29-30).
1. I Kings chapter 2 records the final words and death of David. When David died he was buried in a tomb and there he remained even until now. Peter is proving that the words of David that are recorded at Psalms 16:8ff are not words that explain David's death and resurrection but rather Christ's. Such foreknowledge of Christ would make David a "*prophet*." When God divinely told David "*that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne*" David understood this to be the Christ and His coming kingdom (see II Sam. 7:12ff).
 2. David was therefore more than just a king (I Kg. 2:11), mighty man of valor and war (I Sam. 16:18), skillful harp player (I Sam. 16:18), man after God's heart (I Sam. 13:14), and sweet singer of Israel (II Sam. 23:1) he was a prophet of God.
- I. "*he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses*" (2:31-32).
1. David spoke words of divine inspiration regarding events of the life of Christ that would not happen for another 1000 years. Peter clearly tells us that David's Psalm (16:8ff) is a prophecy regarding the resurrection of Jesus Christ. David knew that of his seed would come the Christ who would enable men to be forgiven of sins. David also knew that this Christ would be killed, resurrected from the dead, and never experience corruption.
 2. Peter, clearly and forcefully, states that the same Jesus that David spoke of as having been killed and resurrected has now come into the world. This Jesus has been murdered by the Jews at the hands of the Romans. Peter states that "*we are all witnesses*" of these events.
 3. Peter is laying the groundwork for the proof of the Christ. Peter has brought to his audience's mind the prophecies regarding the kingdom of God and the Christ through Joel, David, and Samuel. Peter has also reminded his audience of the signs, wonders, and miracles that Jesus performed while in the flesh (Acts 2:22 see also Jn. 20:26-29). The apostle Peter now reminds his audience of their witnessing Jesus in the resurrected state. The apostle Paul tells us that there were above five hundred brethren who saw the Lord in this state (see I Cor. 15:6) (see study # 14; Was Jesus the Christ?).
- J. "*Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear*" (2:33).

1. The Father had promised the Son that he would be resurrected, ascend into heaven to be at the Father's right hand, and be exalted in glory (see I Pet. 1:21).
 2. Peter is calling upon his audience to consider the facts. Many of them had witnessed the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (see I Cor. 15:25-28). They were familiar with the prophecies made by Joel (i.e., 2:28ff and reiterated at Acts 2:16ff) and David in the Psalms concerning Christ and his coming kingdom (II Sam. 7:12ff; Psa. 16:8ff). Peter is basically saying, "Hey, what else could this be but the fulfillment of everything that we have been waiting for in relation to God's promise to provide a way for us to be forgiven of our sins!" (see study # 14)
- K. *"For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet"* (2:34-35).
1. David did not rise from the grave and ascend into the heavens. David was not the answer to man's pressing need of forgiveness. It was the "Lord." To further prove this Peter quotes from Psalms 110:1. David is not the "Lord" that the "Lord" spoke to. Jesus is the only individual that fits this description.
 2. The apostle Paul will later quote from Psalms 110:1 at I Corinthians 15:25 and apply the Psalm to Jesus.
- L. *"Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified"* (2:36).
1. The people listening to Peter had **witnessed** Jesus' "*mighty works and wonders and signs*" (Acts 2:22). Many of these same people saw him killed on the cross and then **saw him in the resurrected state** (Acts 2:32). When these same witnesses were reminded of the prophecies of Joel, David, and Samuel they were left with no excuse for their error.
 2. The very longed for Messiah had come and they killed him on the cross. He has been resurrected from the dead, ascended into the heavens, and now reigns as King of his Kingdom. Jesus is both "Lord" (*kurios*) (i.e., "a potentate, sovereign" [Moulton 244]) and "Christ" (*Christos*) (i.e., the Messiah, anointed one" [Moulton 439]).
- M. *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?"* (2:37).
1. Many among the Pentecost crowd were "*pricked in their heart*" when they heard the accusations of Peter. They knew that they were guilty as they had added up all that the apostle had said. They now knew that Jesus was the Christ and that they had killed the longed for Messiah. The idea of being "*pricked*" (*katanusso*) = "to pierce through; to pierce with compunction (a strong uneasiness caused by a sense of guilt; remorse [AHD 304]) and pain of heart" (Moulton 218).
 2. The only way this Pentecost crowd would be made to feel guilt and remorse for their sinful actions was penetrating preaching that admonished the guilty (see study # 15; Preaching the Gospel). Said guilt moved the guilty to say, "*What shall we do?*" The inference is clear. These guilty men wanted to know if there was any way to remedy the horrible circumstance they had found themselves in.
- N. *"And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (2:38).
1. Peter gives an answer to the guilty people's question; i.e., "*What shall we do?*" The answer to this question is a fulfillment of the Isaiah 2:2-3 and Luke 24:45-49 passage regarding God's kingdom law going forth from Jerusalem. Peter tells them two things to do that would result in their receiving "*the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (see study # 8):
 - a. First, Peter tells the people to "*repent*" (*metanoeo*) = "to undergo a change in frame of mind and feeling, to make a change of principle and practice, to reform" (Moulton 266). Liddell and Scott simply say that the words mean "to change one's mind or purpose" (LS 503). The Jews were on a course of sin (i.e., violating God's holy will). Their frame of mind had to shift from doing unlawful things to spiritually lawful things (see Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 1:13ff).
 - b. Peter not only commanded a change in the frame of mind but he also told them that they needed to be "*baptized unto the remission of sins.*" The word "*baptize*" (*baptizo*) = "to dip in or under water" (LS 146)... "to dip, immerse; to cleanse or purify by washing" (Moulton 65). There are three undeniable facts that lead one to conclude that baptism is not a mere sprinkling

of water but rather a complete immersion into water. First, note that the clear definition of the word *baptizo* means to immerse under water. Secondly, note that when John the baptizer baptized people it was done at places where there was “*much water*” (Jn. 3:23). Why would John need “*much water*” if sprinkling were all there were to baptism? Lastly, we consider the baptism of the Eunuch of Acts 8. The word of God tells us that Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water and came up out of the water (Acts 8:38-39). Why would they need to go down into the water if an emersion wasn’t going to take place? (see study # 16; Baptism)

- c. The important thing that we need to see here is that baptism is “*unto the remission of sins.*” When one repents and is baptized they are forgiven of their past sins. Note the important word “*unto.*” The precise meaning of the Greek word for “*unto*” (i.e., *eis*) = “to express relation, to or towards... of a purpose” (LS 231). There is a relationship between baptism and the remission of sins. Peter tells us that baptism is for the purpose of receiving the forgiveness of sins. When one looks at the Lord’s use of *eis* at Matthew 26:26-28 there can be no doubt that baptism (immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ) is for the purpose of receiving the forgiveness of sins.
2. Peter states that one who is baptized receives the forgiveness of sins and then states that “*ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” What is the “*gift of the Holy Spirit?*” Would this be the repentant man or woman’s baptism of the Holy Spirit? Peter had quoted from Joel 2:28ff where Joel prophesied of the Lord “*pouring forth of my Spirit upon all flesh*” (Acts 2:17). Again, Peter speaks of the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit at Acts 2:33 in relation to the apostle’s ability to speak other languages. Would those who had repented and been baptized receive baptism of the Holy Spirit and consequential powers? The answer to this question is no (see notes at Acts 8:17). The “*gift of the Holy Spirit,*” “*baptism of the Holy Spirit,*” and “*receiving the Holy Spirit*” are three different things. God had promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed (Gen. 12:3). That seed promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). Paul said, “*That upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*” (Gal. 3:11-14). The blessing of Abraham that was fulfilled in Jesus Christ was the **forgiveness of sins** (see Acts 3:24-26). Paul preached on this very topic at Acts 13. The “*promise*” of salvation through the forgiveness of sins is the focal point of the entire sermon (Acts 13:38-39). The gift of the Holy Spirit is thereby the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins is the focal point of the entire Bible. Jesus would be the Messiah who would bear the sins of the world (Isa. 53). His blood sacrifice would provide the forgiveness of sins and His law would reveal what man must do to obtain this great gift of God (Jer. 31:31ff; Eph. 1:7; 2:8).
3. The Nestle and Marshall text translates “*ye shall receive*” (*lempsethe / lambano*) as “*ye will receive.*” Friberg parses the Greek word as a verb / Indicative / Future / middle Deponent (Friberg 370). The “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is something received in the future (i.e., in relation to one having repented and been baptized). The Greek verbs “*repent*” and “*baptized*” are both aorist tense; i.e., a verb tense that denotes past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action. The Greek verb “*given*” the Holy Spirit at Acts 5:32 is also aorist tense. Those who continue obeying God (Greek present tense form for “obey”) are given the Holy Spirit (i.e., truth) in the past without indicating future events. What this says is that truth is received by those who obey and keep obeying. Likewise, the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” (forgiveness of sins) is received by those who “*repent*” and are “*baptized*” and is continued to be had as one continues in truth. There is an undeniable correlation between obedience and being given the Holy Spirit at Acts 5:32. Likewise the same type of correlation between the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” and “*repentance and baptism*” exist at Acts 2:38 (once again, please refer to the Holy Spirit appendix study at the end of this outline).
- O. “*For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him*” (2:39).
 1. The “*promise*” under consideration is the “*gift of the Holy Spirit.*” God had promised man’s forgiveness throughout the OT (Isa. 53:10-11; Jer. 31:31ff; Zech. 12:9-10; 13:1-2) and Jesus told of it as well (see Matt. 26:26ff). Christ’s sacrifice would be the means whereby man is forgiven

- (Col. 1:19ff). Baptism would be the mode that put man in contact with the saving blood of Jesus Christ (see Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 3:20ff).
2. All of humanity (“*your children, and to all that are afar off...*”) are “*called unto*” God for this forgiveness. God calls by the gospel message (see II Thess. 2:13-14).
- P. “*And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation*” (2:40).
1. Luke did not record the “*many other words*” Peter spoke on Pentecost. The context of the sermon infers more teaching about man’s dilemma of sin and the Lord’s remedy through the blood sacrifice. Peter “*testified*” of the events of Christ’s life he witnessed and “*exhorted*” (i.e., imploring, beseeching, calling upon one to do something) the Pentecost crowd to “*Save yourselves from this crooked generation.*” The crooked will certainly be forever condemned. Peter calls upon these people to disassociate themselves from the wicked practices that they had been apart of.
 2. The solution to their dilemma of sin was simple. Hear these words of truth (God’s call), turn away from such sinful thoughts and living (repent), and be baptized so that their sins would be forgiven.
 3. Note that when such a decision has been made that person is saved from the crooked generation. They are no more part of the crooked generation. The baptized believer is now alive in Christ while the crooked generation remains dead in their trespasses and sin (see Eph. 2:1-5). There is a clear line drawn between those who are cleansed from sin and those who live in sin.
- Q. “*They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls*” (2:41).
1. The broad lesson to be grasped is that the church (kingdom of God) that has been the theme of this study (see Acts 1:3-12) is now established with 3000 citizens. Jeremiah had foretold of a new covenant law that would come in the future whereby men would be forgiven of their sins (see Jer. 31:31-34). Isaiah foretold of this law as one that would go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2ff). The law of forgiveness has now been delivered. For the first time in history man is commanded to be baptized that they may be forgiven of their sins and added to the Lord’s church. John had baptized people with a baptism of repentance but now men were to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (see Mk. 1:4-8). Peter had explained that water baptism accomplished a cleansing of the conscience (I Pet. 3:20-21). The author of Hebrews tells us that it is only the blood of Christ that has the power to “*cleans your conscience from dead works*” (Heb. 9:14). One thereby contacts the forgiving blood of Jesus by water baptism. The sinners in Jerusalem heard and “*received*” these words of Peter. Their obedience to God’s command is made manifest in that they were “*baptized*” for the forgiveness of their sins.
 2. The underlying lesson is one of **sanctification, fellowship, and unity**. Once these three thousand people were baptized they formed a sanctified group of people that were set apart from the world of sinners. That which differentiated the 3000 from the crooked generation was their being baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.
- R. “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers*” (2:42).
1. The “*apostles’ teaching*” was none other than the words Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would guide them in (see Jn. 14:26; 16:13; II Jn. 9). This “*teaching*” (i.e., the divinely inspired Word of God or gospel message) is the link that joins baptized believers into a common faith and **fellowship**.
 2. Note that as the early disciples “*continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching*” that they also “*continued steadfastly in fellowship.*” The word “*steadfastly*” (*proskartereo*) = “to persist in adherence (loyal obedience) to a thing; to be intently engaged in, attend constantly to” (Moulton 350). The inference is clear. While the disciples attended with loyal obedience to the doctrine of Christ they shared in “*fellowship*” (*koinonia*) with one another. The Greek word *koinonia* is defined as “partnership, participation, communion” (Moulton 235)... “association” (LS 440). Their **legal association** (i.e., the glue that held them together in an association or partnership) was the forgiveness of their sins and their loyal obedience to the truth. The natural conclusion is that if one were to discontinue loyal obedience to the truth and sin they lost that association with others who continued in truth. Their differentiation from the sinners of the world (i.e., the crooked generation)

would now be lost. To be no different that the world is to be different than the Christian (see study # 17; Bible Fellowship).

3. Not only did the forgiven sinners share fellowship together but they also gave loyal obedience to the “*breaking of bread.*” Seeing that loyal obedience was a part of this ordinance it must clearly be an allusion to the partaking of the Lord’s Supper which was instituted by Jesus at Matthew 26:26ff and intended to be kept by the church (see Acts 20:7ff). Arndt and Gingrich’s Greek English Lexicon defines this “*breaking of bread*” at Acts 2:42 as, “of the bread of the Lord’s Supper, which likewise was broken after giving thanks, and then eaten Mt. 26:26; Mk. 14:22 etc.” (AG 110).
 4. The disciples also continued with loyal obedience to **praying** unto God. God obviously commands that prayers and supplications be made by all men (see I Tim. 2:1).
- S. “*And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles*” (2:43).
1. As the apostles went about preaching the word of God they confirmed those truths with “*wonders and signs*” (see Mk. 16:20). The miracles performed by the apostles served as a “*sign*” to those who witnessed it that the words preached were of a divine origin. The “*wonder*” of the miracles was that they produced amazement in the witnesses. The miracles performed were not mere trickery of sorcery, magic, or slight of hand. These miracles were truly mind bending in that they were actions that could in no way take place under natural circumstances.
 2. When the apostles performed these miracles it produced “*fear*” upon every soul. Some made manifest their fear by “*mocking*” (see Acts 2:13) yet others wanted to know more about the message of salvation (see Acts 2:12).
- T. “*And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need*” (2:44-45).
1. Note that “*all that believed*” are now differentiated from the “*crooked generation*” in that they have been forgiven of their sin. These three thousand forgiven sinners were recognized as “*believers*” and they were “*together... and had all things common.*” This group of forgiven sinners looked after each other’s physical well being from the very beginning of the church.
 - a. The word “*common*” (*koina*) = “common, belonging equally to several” (Moulton 235). Note that at Acts 4:32 Luke makes an observation about the baptized believers who shared together in their adhering to the apostles doctrine and the forgiveness of sins. Luke writes, “*And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common.*” Members of the church who found themselves in need did not stay that way.
 - b. Brethren were of “*one heart and soul.*” Those who shared a love for truth and sought to maintain the forgiveness of their sins through their obedience would not even consider their own possessions their own. The attitude of what is mine is yours governed these early believers. When one was in need that need was met! The “*all things*” that equally belonged to the saints included not only truth but possessions.
 - c. These are early principles of the work of the church and the love wherewith brethren treated each other as they continued to share in the love of truth (see study # 18; The Work of the Church and Study # 19; Brotherly Love; and Study # 20; Bible Unity).
 2. Note that there is nothing said about this new fellowship of saints including the “*needy*” of the world in their “*having all things in common... selling their possessions... parting them to all... according to any man’s needs.*” A study of church benevolence through out the NT produces the same results. The church of Christ helped only those needy that shared their faith in Christ Jesus (see Acts 11:27ff; Rom. 15:25-27). Lest anyone believe that every saint ought to give up all possessions and give to other Christians who will not work let us consider II Thessalonians 3:10. The apostle Paul stated, “*this we command, If any will not work, neither shall he eat.*” Such a statement helps us realize that the early church did not have a “special giving” ceremony where all the saints possessions were laid at the apostles or elders feet each week and then evenly distributed among all brethren. Each Christian is responsible for making a living. While endeavoring to honestly do so there may be needs that arise that are to be met by brethren of better financial standing (see study # 18).

- U. *“And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved”* (2:46-47).
1. These first saved people (the church) came together daily *“with one accord”* (*omoyumadon*) to the *“temple”* (likely because it afforded a large enough area to accommodate all the disciples). The Greek word *omoyumadon* is translated *“with one mind”* by the Nestle / Marshal (hear after denoted by NM) text (pp. 471). Moulton defines the word as *“with one mind, with one accord, unanimously”* (Moulton 288). The exact word is found at Romans 15:5-6 where Paul states, *“Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord (*omoyumadon*) ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The meaning is that the plurality of baptized believers was unanimously in accord with one another regarding their faith. That which brought them to this **unity of mind** was none other than the apostle’s doctrine revealed by divine inspiration. The Christians heard, believed, and were unified in these truths (see study # 21; Bible Unity). **Sanctification, fellowship, and unity** were the results of being added to the Lord’s church. These 3000 souls became a spiritual fraternity of forgiven people who shared a common faith.
 2. The *“breaking of bread”* is equated to *“food”* and this was taken at their homes. The common meals were shared with each other as they *“praised God”* for their newly forgiven state. The idea of having their sins forgiven was cause of great joy and happiness. As the world saw their unity and happiness they *“favored”* these disciples. Said *“favor”* lead to many more obeying the gospel *“day by day.”*
 3. Note that those who were *“added”* were added to the believers. The collective group of believers is termed *“the church”* (see Acts 5:11) (see study # 1).
 4. Consider two questions over these final verses:
 - a. Are Christians to assemble *“day by day”* today at a *“temple?”* If we do not assemble day by day are we forsaking the assembly of saints (Heb. 10:24-25)? If a church wants to assemble day by day to study and distribute mutual edification there is certainly nothing wrong committed. We often hold week long preaching meetings to edify the saints and try to reach the lost. The wrong would be to bind a *“day by day”* assembly. Some would say; however, that this is an *“example”* to follow. This would be true if there were no other instructions regarding the assembling of the saints. Latter, Luke will reveal that the specified day of worship was to be the first day of the week (see Acts 20:7ff). Other times of study and praising God clearly occurred that members of the church would be edified (see Eph. 4:11ff).
 - b. Secondly, should we come together day by day and eat together? Should this be done from time to time? Again, there is no specific command to eat our meals together day by day. These events illustrate the sanctified state that these new Christians enjoyed. They wanted to be with each other because they shared a common faith and hope in this life. Such a life of continued spiritual exercise will give way to other souls being saved. Shouldn’t we have this same fervent spirit?

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| Church, the Kingdom of God In Prophecy: | Establishment of the church, kingdom of God (Acts 2). |
| The Kingdom was to come through the seed of David (II Sam. 7:12-17). | Fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:30) |
| The Kingdom would be established in the latter days (Isa. 2:2-3 and Dan. 2:28). | Matt. 3:1-2; Luke 3:1-2. Fulfilled on Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:16-17 and Acts 3:24) |

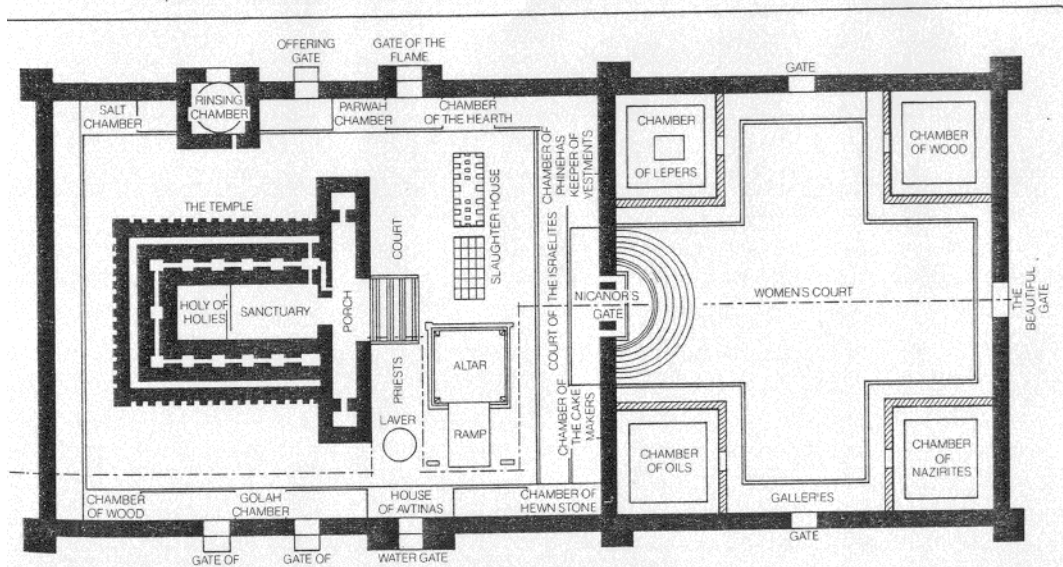
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|---|---|
| The Kingdom of God would come with power (Mk. 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:6-8) | Fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) |
| The Kingdom would be established on Zion (Jerusalem) (Isa. 2:2-3). | Fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2:1,5,47 and Heb. 12:18-23) |
| The Kingdom would begin at the point of the law going forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Luke 24:45-49). | Law went forth from Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38) |
| The Church or Kingdom of God is now Established | |

Chapter 3 34 AD

I. Peter and John heal the lame beggar at the temple (Acts 3:1-10):

- A. *“Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour”* (3:1).
1. The year was approximately 34 AD. Peter and John, as was their custom, headed to the temple to participate in the *“hour of prayer.”* “The more common and perhaps more important Jewish tradition was to regard the three hours of prayer as morning (3rd hour), afternoon (6th hour), and evening (9th hour)” (ISBE v. 2, pp. 769). The OT Jews were accustomed to praying three times a day (see Dan. 6:10; Ps. 55:17).
 2. Peter and John were likely continuing what they had always done as well as going to the temple at a time when many religious minded people would be present. Christians today are not commanded to pray at three specific times of the day but rather exhorted to pray without ceasing and to give thanks for all blessings of this life (see I Thess. 5:17).
- B. *“And a certain man that was lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple”* (3:2).
1. Each day of the week the Jews would come to the temple to pray. Such religious activity would mean opportunity for those in need. One such person is identified as *“a certain man lame from birth.”* His family (or friends) would carry him to the temple each day in hopes that his financial needs may be met through begging for money. The only other thing known about this man is that he was *“more than 40 years old”* (see Acts 4:22).
 2. The gate at the temple known as *“Beautiful”* is thought to be located at the East end of Herod’s temple for the Jews (see map below taken from the ISBE v. 4, pp. 773).

A plan of Herod's temple, adapted from *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 15 (1971), s.v. "Temple," p. 962



- C. *“who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God”* (3:3-8).
1. *“Alms”* (*elehmosunh*) = “pity, compassion... alms (money or goods given to the poor in charity), almsgiving” (Moulton 131).
 2. The greatest compassionate act that Peter could do for this lame man was to miraculously heal him in the name of Jesus.
 3. The lame man was healed in that his previously unusable feet and ankles became strong and he was able to walk.
 4. After the healing, the lame man leaped about giving praise to the Lord.
- D. *“And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him”* (3:9-10).
1. The miracles that Jesus performed while among the living produced amazement (see Acts 2:22). Peter now performs the second recorded miracle that displayed the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:8). The first recorded miracle was the speaking of tongues (Acts 2:1ff). The apostles have together performed *“many wonders and signs”* (see Acts 2:43) but these two are actually named.
 2. When *“all the people”* see the man that they knew to be lame now walking they are amazed. Peter now has the attention of many.

II. Peter's sermon at Solomon's Porch (Acts 3:11-26):

- A. *“And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's greatly wondering”* (3:11).
1. The miracle caused such a commotion that multitudes of people came to see the man they knew to be previously lame.
 2. Peter, John, and the lame man were *“in the porch that is called Solomon's.”* Solomon's porch (porticoes) was the wall (or porch) due east of the temple proper. The Beautiful Gate would have looked outward to Solomon's porch. Between the Beautiful Gate and Solomon's porch was the Court of Gentiles. Apparently Peter, John, and the man that was lame have now left the temple area and traveled a few yards east to Solomon's porch.

- B. *“And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? Or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?”* (2:12).
1. Peter faithfully and humbly redirects the glory of the miracle to God.
 2. The Lord was simply working miracles through the apostles to confirm the words spoken as of divine origin (see Heb. 2:3-4).
- C. *“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses”* (3:13-15).
1. Now that Peter has the attention of many witnesses to the miracle and thereby gives them the divine words of God. Peter immediately exposes their sins and tells them what the divine remedy is. If this lame man has been healed by the miraculous power of God through Peter and John it stands to reason that Peter and John speak divine words from God (Mk. 16:20) (see study # 21; Miracles and their Purpose).
 2. The apostles Peter and John, being divinely guided by the Holy Spirit, state the sins of the people. They were guilty of crucifying the Son of God (see also Acts 2:23). Though Pilate was determined to release Jesus as an innocent man these very people that Peter is speaking to were guilty of rejecting the governor’s offer. They wanted Jesus dead and so he was killed.
 3. Though *“the Prince of life”* had been killed he has now been resurrected and glorified having ascended into the heavens to be with the Father (see Acts 1:9-11). Peter states that the proof of Christ’s resurrection and glorification is found in the witnesses.
 4. The people, having the miracle before them, are now faced with a decision. Obey or reject these words that are obviously of divine origin (see study # 6).
- D. *“And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all”* (3:16).
1. It seems evident Peter speaks of the faith of he and John that has brought this miracle to pass. Faith in the name of Jesus emboldened Peter and John to use the authority of Christ’s name to call upon this lame man to walk. Christ’s name and person is authority defined.
 2. The lame man was not partially healed. This man was given *“perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”* An undeniable miracle has taken place (see Acts 4:14-16). Their response ought to be just as those on Pentecost who experienced and witnessed the miraculous baptism of the Holy Spirit that had come upon the apostles enabling them to speak in tongues. That response is, *“what shall we do?”*
- E. *“And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled”* (3:17-18).
1. Peter has exposed the Jew’s sin. They were guilty of crucifying the Son of God. Proof of his divine message is given through the healing of the lame man. No one could deny that it was a miraculous occurrence. While Peter’s audience stood listening to him the apostle states that *“I know that in ignorance ye did it.”* The word *“ignorance”* (*agnoia*) = “want of perception, ignorance... a mistake” (LS 7). Moulton defines the word as “sin through ignorance” (Moulton 4). The sinful deed of crucifying Jesus was done with a “want of perception... ignorance.” The people did not perceive that the man they were crucifying was actually who he claimed to be. Note that the Jews killed Jesus without perceiving that he was the Son of God; however, this ignorance did not excuse them from the consequences of the sinful action. If sins of ignorance are ok then why would Peter tell them to repent? Peter’s statement has a ring of sympathy and understanding... *“I know that in ignorance ye did it... BUT...”* Man today must understand that just because he sins in ignorance that he is not excused from the judgment of God. Man will not be able to stand before the Lord on the Day of Judgment and say, “I did not know that you wanted me to be baptized, keep the Lord’s Supper from week to week, visit the widows and orphans in their affliction...” etc (see study # 22; Sins of Ignorance).

2. Though these people performed the sinful deed of crucifixion it was not without design and use of God. The Lord has ever used sinful men to accomplish His will. Pharaoh of Egypt is one example. God had commanded Pharaoh to let His people go that they may worship and make sacrifices. This was not something Pharaoh wanted to do and God knew it (see Ex. 9:30; 10:3). The hardness of Pharaoh's heart enabled God to achieve His divine purpose of demonstrating His great power to the world (see Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17). Likewise, the Lord God Almighty put Jesus before the unmerciful Jews. They had the chance to accept Jesus as the Messiah and king of God's kingdom; however, they killed him because he exposed their sin (see Jn. 7:7). The prophets of old foretold, by divine inspiration, that such suffering on the part of the Christ would take place (see Isa. 53).
- F. *“Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord”* (3:19).
1. We studied the word *“repent”* at Acts 2:38. The Greek *metanoeo* = “to undergo a change in frame of mind and feeling, to make a change of principle and practice, to reform” (Moulton 266). Liddell and Scott simply say that the words mean “to change one's mind or purpose” (LS 503). The Jews had rejected Jesus as being the Christ. This rejection and crucifixion was *“sin.”* Peter is asking them to undergo a change of mind and accept Jesus based upon the evidence of the divine miracle that has been performed. Such a change of mind will result in their sins being *“blotted out”* (*exaleipho*) = “to wipe off or away... to blot out, obliterate, expunge {to erase}... metaphorically to wipe out guilt” (Moulton 144). When man sins there is a defilement now attached to the soul. Moses records, *“And if any one sin, and do any of the things which Jehovah hath commanded NOT to be done...”* (Lev. 5:17; cf. also Lev. 22:9). Those who walk in sin are depicted in Leviticus as *“unclean”* (Lev. 16:16, 30), *“defiled”* (Lev. 18:30), *“impure”* (Lev. 22:21), and having a *“blemish or imperfection”* (Lev. 22:21). The blood of Jesus was the only means by which man's sins could be *“blotted out”* (i.e., erased or cleansed) (see study # 23; Identity of Sin and # 24; Forgiveness). While the blood of bulls and goats only gave man cause to remember his sins the blood of Christ removes them completely (see Lev. 4:4; 17:11; Heb. 10:3).
 2. The *“seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord”* indicates a sense of relief. Sin carries with it guilt (see Heb. 9:14). Moulton's definition of *“blot out”* metaphorically meaning to wipe out guilt makes sense. To have sins removed is to be **justified** (i.e., acquitted from the penalty associated with one's crime) (see Rom. 5:1ff) (see study # 24). Sin carries with it the penalty of eternal death (Rom. 3:23). If I know that my sins have been wiped away and that I will not be held accountable for those violations of God's laws I will be made to feel pretty good. We cannot; however, forget that forgiveness does not occur by simple acknowledgment of the wrong and a mind that desires to change (i.e., repentance). Peter had earlier stated that baptism was the act that removed the sins (see Acts 2:38).
- G. *“and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from old”* (3:20-21).
1. This verse is defining one of two events. First, it may be an allusion to Christ coming to this world (as the prophets foretold of) so that man may be blessed with the forgiveness of sins. Secondly, it may mean that Christ will surely come again to judge the world and bring home his saints to glory.
 2. The context of the chapter plainly suggests that Jesus has come to bring the blessings of salvation to mankind just as the prophets had spoken (continue reading).
- H. *“Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people”* (3:22-23).
1. Peter quotes from Deuteronomy 18:15-19 to prove that the prophets of old had foretold of Christ's coming. Moses had drawn a clear contrast between the witches, wizards, and sorcerers and the prophet that God would raise up from among the people. The wicked Canaanites gave heed to the teachings and sayings of the wizards and sorcerers; however, God's people were to be ever directed by divine revelation. Jesus, the prophet God would raise up, would speak words of divine

- revelation. Said words would direct God's people in the moral paths they were to travel. Israel was thereby commanded by God to annihilate all Canaanites due to the danger of being taught things that were not of a divine order (see Deut. 20:16-18) (see study # 25; Bible Authority).
2. Those who refuse to hear the words of this prophet will be judged by the Lord. The fulfillment of Moses' prophecy was to be realized in Jesus Christ (Luke so states). Jesus had also said that Moses predicted his day (see Jn. 5:45-47).
 3. The very words of Jesus would bring sanctification (a blotting out of man's sin), fellowship (an association of people who share in sanctification), and unity (many joined together as one in their purpose to obey Jesus).
- I. *"Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken they also told of these days"* (3:24).
1. Jesus the Son of God in Prophecy: (Lk. 24:44-47)
 - a. The OT Law was divided up into three sections before Jesus came into the world. The three divisions are known as the "*scriptures*" (Lk. 24:45; Jn. 5:39):
 - b. Jesus stated that these "*scriptures*" comprehensively testified of Him:
 1. The first division of the OT is "*The Law of Moses*" (The first five books of our Bible):
 - a. Jesus, the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3 [Gal. 3:8, 16].
 - b. Jesus, to bless all nations (Gen. 22:18 [Gal. 3:26-29].
 - c. Moses refers to Jesus as a great prophet (Deut. 18:18 [Jn. 5:46; Acts 3:19-23].
 2. The Second division of the OT is known as "*The Prophets*" (includes the books of Josh. – 2kg.; major and minor prophets):
 - a. Jesus, the seed of David (II Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 7:10-14 [Matt. 1:1, 6, 17].
 - b. Jesus, called Emmanuel (Isa. 7:14 [Matt. 1:18-23].
 - c. Jesus, born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 [Matt. 2:1-6; Jn. 7:41-42].
 - d. Jesus, the king of his kingdom (Jer. 23:5-7 [Jn. 18:33-37].
 - e. Jesus, to bear the sins of mankind (Isa. 53:4-6 [Heb. 9:27-28].
 - f. Jesus, as king, made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Zech. 9:9 [Matt. 21:4-5].
 - g. Jesus, sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12-13 [Matt. 26:14-16; 27:9-10].
 - h. Jesus, the crucified one (Isa. 53:7-8 [Luke 23:33].
 - i. Jesus, the gazed upon (Zech. 12:10 [Jn. 19:37].
 3. The third division of the OT is "*The Psalms*" (includes Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and I and II Chronicles):
 - a. Jesus, the seed of David (Ps. 132:11 [Matt. 1:1, 6, 17].
 - b. Jesus to be raised from the dead (Ps. 16:9-11 [Matt. 12:39-40; 28:1-6; Acts 2:22-28].
 - c. Jesus the "*Son of man*" (Dan. 7:13 [Matt. 8:20; 26:64].
- J. *"Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"* (3:24).
1. Peter was addressing the Jews at the temple (Solomon's Porch). These people were the "*sons of the prophets.*" These Jews also had a close connection with Jehovah God in that He had made a "covenant" (promise or law) regarding their future blessed state.
 2. To receive a "*blessing*" (*eneulogeo*) = "to bless in respect of, or by means of" (Moulton 140). The American Heritage Dictionary tells us that the word can be used in reference to "sanctifying one, to invoke divine favor upon, to confer well-being or prosperity upon one, to endow, as with talent... happy" (187). God's divine favor is invoked (a blessing) upon those who have their sins forgiven (see Rom. 4:6-8; Gal. 3:8-9)
- K. *"Unto you first God, having raised up his Servants, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities"* (3:26).
1. The Lord was to fulfill his covenant promise first to the Jews then to the whole world. This promise or blessing was the forgiveness of man's sin.
 2. Peter terms this blessing a "*turning away from iniquities.*" The meaning of "*turn away*" (*apostrepho*) = "to remove... to turn a people from their allegiance to their sovereign, pervert, incite to revolt... reject, repulse, to desert" (Moulton 47). One who has lived a life of sin will revolt,

reject, and desert this style of living due to the instructions of Jesus Christ. A life of iniquity is opposed to sanctification, fellowship, and unity.

Chapter 4 34 AD

I. Peter and John are arrested for Preaching Jesus (4:1-4):

A. *“And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead”* (4:1-2).

1. Peter and John are speaking to the Jews at Solomon’s porch. There are many people gathered due to the miracle that had been performed. Such a stir would draw the attention of *“the priests and the captain of the temple.”* The priests would be those sons of Aaron who were responsible for the sacrifices and daily ordinances of the temple. The *“captain”* (*strategos*) of the temple was *“the chief of the Levites who kept guard in and around the temple (see Lk. 22:4, 52; Acts 4:1; 5:24-26)”* (Moulton 377). This man would be responsible for policing the temple area. He apparently had underlings (a police force / see Acts 5:24-26). Lastly, we find the Sadducees numbered with the disgruntled temple authority. *“The Sadducees were essentially aristocratic (i.e., a person of noble heritage and character)... they derived their power from their class, while the Pharisees derived theirs from learning.... they denied the resurrection of the body, and did not believe in any existence after death... and consequently denied future rewards or punishments in a life to come (cf. Mk. 12:18; Acts 4:12; 23:80). The consequent emphasis on life in this world was consistent with the Sadducees’ concern with their position of power, status, and wealth, and it left no room for messianic hopes and a coming kingdom of God”* (ISBE v. 4, pp. 279)
2. The temple was a place that stood for the Mosaic Law. The Sadducees had no belief in the resurrection of the dead. Here were two men (Peter and John) who were at the temple teaching a doctrine that, in the mind of the priests and captain, affronted the teachings of Moses. These two men were also teaching that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. A resurrection teaching would anger the Sadducees. So antithetical was the teaching of Peter and John to the temple and the Sadducees that the disgruntled Jews felt that it must be stopped immediately.

B. *“And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide. But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand”* (4:3-4).

1. The priests, captain, and Sadducees apprehended Peter and John and sent them to a *“ward”* (prison) cell to spend the night. The time of this occurrence was *“eventide”* (*hespera*) which simply means the evening time.
2. The apostle Paul would later write, *“faith comes of hearing and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). These Jews that witnessed the notable miracle, heard Peter’s message of Christ, and the forgiveness of one’s sins *“believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”* As one studies the word of God it must be approached intelligently. The Bible is somewhat likened unto a puzzle that has to be pieced all together before the whole picture can be seen. We know that there were three thousand people added to the church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Those on Pentecost heard the gospel, believed and received it, confessed the name of Jesus (necessarily inferred in that they were convicted of sin for originally rejecting and killing Jesus), repented of sins, were baptized for the remission of sins, and continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine (see Acts 2:37-44). Luke reveals that the original three thousand people who received the forgiveness of their sins on Pentecost had now grown to 5,000. If the people who *“believed”* on Pentecost received the remission of their sins through hearing, believing, repenting, confessing that Jesus is the Christ, being baptized, and continuing steadfastly in the apostles doctrines then what else did these additional converts do? They did the same thing though it is not stated. The increase in numbers illustrates this most valuable point. What was said of the first

3,000 people who received the forgiveness of their sins must consistently be said of the additional 2,000 people and everyone else who obeys the gospel today (see study # 8).

3. We are not told how many people obeyed the gospel on this occasion. We know that it was not exactly 2,000 people; however, because there were some that were being added to the church "*day by day*" (see Acts 2:47).

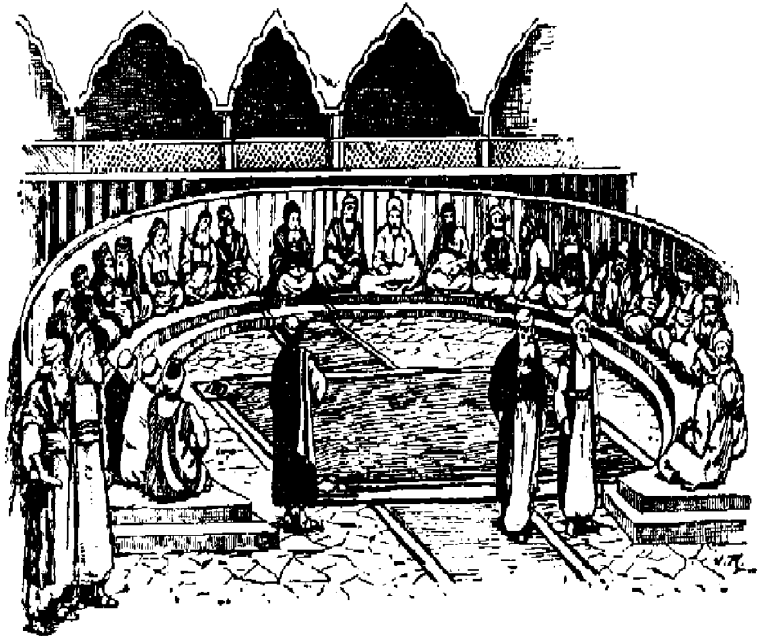
II. Peter and John on Trial (4:5-22):

A. "*And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; And Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of kindred of the high priest*" (4:5-6).

1. Annas had served as high priest from A.D. 6 to 15 and Caiaphas, Annas' son-in-law, served from A.D. 18 to 36. Annas had been stripped of his office by the Roman Government and given to Caiaphas. The Jews would have truly considered Annas the rightful high priest due to their life long appointment (Num. 20:28; 35:25). Caiaphas had been greatly responsible for mustering up the Jews against Jesus (see Matt. 26:1-5). Note; however, that it is Annas that is referred to as the "*high priest.*" Annas was the first to examine Jesus under trial before his crucifixion (see Jn. 18:12). Annas then sent Jesus to Caiaphas to be further examined by the Sanhedrin Council (see Matt. 26:57ff).
2. The identity of John and Alexander are unknown.
3. The Sanhedrin council is once again assembled to see to the case of Peter and John preaching in the name of Jesus and speaking of the resurrection of the dead. Annas, Caiaphas, and the rest of the elders, scribes, and rulers likely had a bitter taste in their mouth in relationship to the name of Jesus. They had dealt underhandedly to rid him out of their lives. Now, there are more who are spokesman for the Lord.

B. "*And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?*" (4:7).

1. The Sanhedrin Council was the then governing body of the city of Jerusalem. "In number the Sanhedrin consisted of seventy members and the high priest as president. The number seventy is significant. Moses chose seventy elders to assist him (Nu. 11:6)... Only the high priest could preside over the Sanhedrin... next in rank was the chief priests and then elders... The powers of the Sanhedrin were not limited merely to religious affairs while the Romans controlled civil matters. On the contrary, the Romans allowed the Jewish Sanhedrin the same large control of the internal affairs that they granted other subject peoples" (ISBE, v. 4, pp. 332-333).
2. The picture to the right depicts the scene. Peter and John are placed in the midst of the council and questioned.
3. The question was one of authority. The Council wanted to know by what authority these two men healed the lame man. No one could deny the miracle so there must be some authority behind the act. This same council had earlier asked Jesus the same question (see Matt. 21:23ff).



C. "*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of*

Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole" (4:8-10).

1. We find herein a great lesson on Bible authority (see study # 25). Note that the Sanhedrin council has asked Peter and John , "*By what power, or in what name, have ye done this.*" The word "*power*" (*dunamis*) = "power, might, strength... ability to do a thing, faculty, capacity" (LS 213). Power and authority are directly associated. When the Jews witnessed Jesus casting out a demon in the synagogue they exclaimed, "*What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out*" (Lk. 4:36). Jesus' authority was made manifest in his displayed power. The lesson is that when the phrase, "*in the name*" is used it is a phrase of authority (see Col. 3:17). Peter and John were able to perform this power by the authority of Jesus Christ. Jesus authorized and is the source of this divine miracle. Peter and John were simply ambassadors of Jesus and thereby worked under and by his authority.
 2. Observe the following:
 - a. Peter states that the council is examining them "*concerning a good deed done to an impotent man.*" Peter's point is that it seems odd that they have been thrown in prison and are now being put on trial for doing a good deed. Such a statement calls into question the motives and characters of the council.
 - b. Secondly, Peter states that it is by the authority and power of Christ that he and John performed this miracle.
 - c. Thirdly, Peter makes sure that the council is reminded of the fact that they were responsible for killing the Lord Jesus Christ. This same Christ has been resurrected from the dead.
 - d. Fourthly, the proof of Christ's resurrection, power, and authority is found in "*this man who stands before you whole.*"
 3. An undeniable miracle had been performed and the source of it named. What would the council do?
 4. One other thing to note in this text is the fact that Luke reveals Peter to be "*filled with the Holy Spirit.*" The NT clearly explains to us that when one is "filled with the Holy Spirit" that person's mind is filled with the gospel of truth (see Col. 1:25-28; 3:16 compared to Eph. 5:18-19). During the early days of the church such knowledge was infused to man by inspiration (Numbers 11:26-29; 12:6-7; II Pet. 1:21). Today; however, we live in an age where the gospel has been fully revealed. There is nothing more than man's desire to study and accept God's word that depicts him as being filled with the Holy Spirit and thereby being a "*partaker of the divine nature*" (II Pet. 1:3-4). While Peter and John were miraculously filled with the Holy Spirit to speak these words (see Jn. 16:13ff) you and I must study (see Rom. 10:17; II Tim. 2:15) (see study # 26; Filled with the Holy Spirit).
- D. "*He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner*" (4:11).
1. The apostle Peter, by divine inspiration, quotes to the council Psalms 118:22.
 2. Peter, being divinely filled with the Holy Spirit, announces the identity of Jesus. Peter has identified Jesus as the Christ, the one the members of the Sanhedrin council had crucified, one raised from the dead by God, and the one responsible for miraculously healing the lame man under consideration. Jesus is now termed "*a stone.*" A "*stone*" (*lithos*) = "a stone" (Moulton 252).
 3. Peter would latter quote from the prophet Isaiah at I Pet. 2:6. Isaiah had foretold of the chief cornerstone of God's kingdom at Isaiah 28:16. The people of God had fallen away from truth and were under threat of attack by the Assyrians and Babylonians. Rather than seeking help from God they turned to the Egyptians (cf. Isa. 30:1-2). Rather than changing their sinful ways they continued in them. This chief cornerstone would make a distinction between the just and righteous among the people as Jesus does today (cf. Isa. 28:17). Zion, throughout the scriptures, stands as a figure of the future kingdom of God (cf. Isa. 2:2-3; Heb. 12:22-28). The chief corner stone that all other stones are patterned after is elect and precious (honorable due to his righteous and just character). All those who so live (i.e., just and right / holy) shall never "*be put to shame.*" God has and will fulfill all His promises.

4. The apostle Paul wrote, “Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20). Individual citizens (Christians) of the kingdom of God (the church) are “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.*” This statement tells us that it is the teachings of the apostles and prophets that distinguish citizens of the kingdom of God from other kingdoms of men. To build is to construct to a completed structure. The structure stands upon a firm foundation. Paul told Timothy regarding truth that, “*the firm foundation of God stands*” (II Tim. 2:19). The apostles and prophets were inspired men who delivered the doctrine of Christ to the world (II Pet. 3:2). Christ Jesus himself being the “*chief cornerstone*” in the structure. The “*chief cornerstone*” (*akrogoniaios*) = “at the extreme angle; the corner foundation-stone” (LS 30). “Lying at the extreme corner... cornerstone or capstone” (AG 33). The word cornerstone is used figuratively to denote “indispensable and fundamental basis of something” (AHD 325). Paul is saying that the source of apostles and prophets teaching that serve as the foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. Christ lays the foundation! Paul told the Corinthians, “*For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*” (I Cor. 3:11). Jesus is thereby the standard of man’s state of being. Those who do not meet the standard of truth (the stone) are identified as not being in fellowship and unity with those who do meet that standard. Said men are viewed as ruff stones that do not match the stone of Christ and are thereby not sanctified in Christ Jesus (see study # 17 and # 20).
5. This stone (Jesus) is the one that every one ought to be molded, patterned after, and the object of man’s adoration, affection, and influence. This very stone was rather “*set at nought*” by the builders (i.e., the Jews). The term, “*set at nought*” (*exoutheneo*) = “to make light of, set at nought, despise, contemn, treat with contempt and scorn” (Moulton 148). The very man that the builders set as the chief cornerstone for all to be patterned after, adored, and emulated was treated with contempt and scorned. Jesus was despised and rejected as the prophets had said he would be (see Isa. 53). How could such an event take place? What was so offensive about Jesus?
 - a. First of all, Jesus explained that said treatment was due to the fact that he exposed man’s evil deeds (see Jn. 7:7). The council clearly rejected the chief cornerstone because he told them that they were in sin. Their **proud** and arrogant hearts were unwilling to accept another man telling them such things (see study # 27; Attitudes of Man).
 - b. Secondly, the Jews rejected Christ because he **did not meet their expectations of a king** that would free them from Roman oppression. Jesus came preaching repentance and humility and this was not something that the Jews saw as meeting their expectations of a Kingly Messiah. Jesus too quoted from Psalms 118:22 at Matthew 21:42. The context of Matthew 21 is a parable about a husbandman who lent out his field for hire. When the harvest time came he sent his servants to collect the rent that was due to him for the use of the land. Those who rented the land; however, killed these servants. The husbandman then sends his son yet the renters also kill him. Jesus asks the chief priests and Pharisees what should be done to these renters who have so wickedly treated the husbandman’s servants and own son. They replied that they should be destroyed. Jesus then quotes to them Psalms 118:22 and the Jews got the point. They had performed in the same manner as the wicked renters that were entrusted with the husbandman’s land. The Jews did not consider Jesus the Messiah and thereby he was not treated as such.
 - c. The third reason the Jews set at nought Jesus was that they **loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God**. To admit that Jesus was the Christ was to relinquish their power and authority over the people (see John 12:37ff).
- E. “*And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved*” (4:12).
 1. The Sanhedrin council had rejected, despised, and treated with scorn Jesus. Jesus should have been their stone of adoration, influence, and example to follow yet they rejected him. To reject the one who has all authority and the way to eternal salvation is to reject God’s offer to be saved.
 2. While mankind may search for salvation through the teachings of various men Peter tells us that it is through the authority of Christ alone that man will be saved. There is no salvation in Mohamed (Muslims), Joseph Smith (Mormons), the Pope (Catholic church), or Martin Luther (Lutheran

- church). Peter had earlier said the same thing when the Lord Jesus asked him if there was any other to turn to (see John 6:66-68).
3. The “*name*” of Jesus thereby represents supreme and SOLE authority in the realm of eternity (see study # 25).
- F. “*Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus*” (4:13).
1. What did the members of the Sanhedrin council perceive or observe in Peter and John to make them conclude that they were “*unlearned and ignorant?*” Apparently none of the higher educated men had any knowledge of Peter and John. Peter and John were not Pharisees, chief priests, scribes, or Sadducees that had learned at the feet of known scholars of the day. The bold and confident statements of such unlearned and ignorant men caused the Jews to “*marvel.*” They said, “*Wow, these guys really seem to have a lot of knowledge and they are confident of their position.*”
 2. Secondly, note that the Sanhedrin council “*took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*” The idea of “*taking knowledge*” (*epiginosko*) of someone is to “to make a thing a subject of observation; hence, to arrive at knowledge from preliminaries; to attain to a knowledge of” (Moulton 155). The preliminary information regarding Peter and John’s association with Jesus led the council to conclude that these men had been with Jesus.
- G. “*And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves saying, What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it*” (4:14-16).
1. The question of whether or not a miracle has occurred is not an issue. All see and agree that a miraculous event has transpired. All agree that the miracle had been performed through Peter and John (who have given the authority of the event to Jesus).
 2. This is an interesting point. To this time we find the following:
 - a. Peter and John have healed a man who had been lame from birth by the authority of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Peter and John had preached a message of Jesus, repentance, and the Lord’s resurrection.
 - c. The council has recognized and admitted that a true miracle has taken place “*through them.*”
 - d. What will they do with the evidence and teaching?
- H. “*But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus*” (4:17-18).
1. After a private consultation with each other the council decided that the best course of action is to simply threaten Peter and John not to speak by the authority and power of Jesus any longer. They saw that there was power in the name of Jesus and rather than acknowledge it they try to suppress it.
 2. While such actions are mind boggling it nonetheless is a representation of modern man’s character and attitude toward the truth (see study # 27). If the truth hurts suppress it. People do not want their kids’ “self esteem” wounded by words of truth. Error on every hand is tolerated in the name of “love.” The Sanhedrin council saw the miracle yet would not respond to it due to their selfish desires listed above.
- I. “*But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard*” (4:19).
1. Let us recall that Jesus had commanded the apostles go and “*make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*” (Matt. 28:19-20). Peter and John both say to the council, “Do you expect us to obey you rather than God?”
 2. While the Sanhedrin council represented the Jewish civil authority they were not to be placed above the law or authority of God. Peter would later speak of the moral obligation of all

Christians to obey and honor civil governing authorities (I Pet. 2:13-17) (as did the apostle Paul [Rom. 13:1ff]); however, no authority on earth is above that of God.

3. Though civil authorities today permit abortions, consumption of alcohol, and freedom of speech in the form of cursing God's word will not be trumped on these moral issues.

J. *"for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard"* (4:20).

1. Peter and John were eye witnesses of not only the life of Jesus but also his death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. They saw Jesus ascend into the heavens (Acts 1:9ff).
2. Peter and John also *"heard"* Jesus preach the kingdom of God. There was no denying the fact that Jesus was the Christ and no man or government was going to stop the apostles from proclaiming the gospel of man's salvation.

K. *"And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought"* (4:21-22).

1. The Sanhedrin council threatened Peter and John likely with up to forty stripes according to Deuteronomy 25:1-4. Though the council would have liked to punish Peter and John they perceived that it would not be a wise thing to do seeing that all the people *"glorified God for that which was done."* The masses of people credited God for the miraculous healing of the lame man through Peter and John. The council then would appear to be fighting against God if they punished Peter and John. Note that even though the council did not beat Peter and John they nonetheless set themselves against God by threatening the apostles for doing this good deed.
2. Why would Luke record the age of the lame man? Simple, the age is recorded to illustrate the great length of time that had elapsed while this man remained lame in all the public eye. This miraculous healing was an indisputable divine event.
3. At the close of this event we find it interesting that it is the "ignorant and unlearned" that have seen the simplicity of the event. The highly educated have viewed such acts as threatening. Many today, in the world of higher education, continue to miss the simple truths of the gospel message. Men do not need a PHD to read, understand, believe, and obey (see study # 28; The Simplicity of the Gospel Message).

III. A prayer that reveals the apostle's understanding of their mission (4:23-31):

A. *"And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them"* (4:23)

1. Once released by the Sanhedrin council Peter and John come back to their *"own company."* The term *"own company"* (*idios*) = "one's own... members of one's own household" (Moulton 199). This Greek word emphasizes the distinction between Peter, John, and the 5,000 mentioned at Acts 4:4 and the Sanhedrin council of Acts 4:5ff. The unbelieving Jews were not a part of the 5,000 saved souls. This illustrates a fellowship that existed between Peter, John, and the 5,000 that is based upon their common belief and obedience in the apostles doctrine (see also Acts 2:41-42) (see study # 17).
2. The next verse, Acts 4:24, states that these baptized believers, who were in fellowship with one another, *"lifted up their voice to God with one accord..."* The fellowship of the brethren had as its foundation the *"stone which was set at nought by the builders"* (see Acts 4:11). Those who patterned themselves after Jesus Christ and his teaching shared in a fellowship and they were in *"one accord."* Once again this phrase indicates a unity that existed among the believers that had as its bonding agent the word of God (see Acts 2:42-46). When the word of God was preached to these united people they believed and it is that belief joined with their obedience that united them in sanctification, fellowship, and unity (see Acts 3:22-23; 4:4) (see study # 20).
3. Peter and John came among those of like precious faith and told them all that had occurred.

B. *"And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who by thy Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say, Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed:"* (Acts 4:24-26)

1. Luke does not tell us whether the entire 5,000 saints were assembled at this time yet he does state that the gathering was of those of the same company. A study of the context and Acts 4:31 points toward the identity of this gathering being the apostles.
 2. Upon hearing the words of Peter and John the apostles state their faith in the form of a prayer. The prayer illustrates an understanding of the authority and providence of God. By the authority of God the heavens, earth, and sea were formed. The Psalmist stated that God simply spoke and all things of creation came to existence (see Ps. 33:9). All of nature itself is subject to the authority of God (man included) and these early believers understood this.
 3. Secondly, these early Christians understood the providence of God. Note that Luke records the apostles quoting from Psalms 2:1-2 in relation to Christ and his persecution. David's mouth spoke divine revelation and prophecy "*by the Holy Spirit*" in relation to what humanity would do to Christ (see study # 5). The Gentiles, common Jews, kings of the earth, and rulers among the Jews "*were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Anointed.*"
 4. The people understand the hostility of the world against the Christ that they love. Such hostility will surely be pored over to them just as the Lord had predicted at John 15:18ff.
- C. "*for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass*" (4:27-28).
1. God simply used the hardened people's heart to accomplish His will. Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Romans in general, and the peoples of Israel gathered themselves against Jesus to do him harm and it all happened according to God's will.
 2. The apostles use the word "*foreordained*" in relation to the Lord's crucifixion at the hands of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and Jews. The word "*foreordained*" (*proorizo*) = "to limit or mark out beforehand; to design definitely beforehand, ordain beforehand, predestine" (Moulton 345). The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was designed by God far before it actually took place (see Eph.1:3-7). Evidence of this foreordination of Christ may be seen in the words of the prophets of old (see study # 29; Jesus in Prophecy). Man's justification had been providentially provided far before the beginnings of this world.
- D. "*And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretch forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus*" (4:29-30).
1. The apostles pray that God would "*look upon their threats.*" The unbelieving Jews had threatened Peter and John to not preach or perform miracles in the name of Jesus Christ any more. They did not say why they just threatened them not to do it any more. Odd that these learned men would tell others not to perform any more life saving miracles and to not teach any more about the Anointed one that the OT scriptures spoke much about. The word of God was obviously offensive to these men. When one knows that people are going to be offended by the words you speak it takes boldness to go ahead and speak. These Christians pray for this boldness to speak after they, by the power of God, exercise the authority of Jesus over sickness, diseases, and the physical elements of the world. Christians today ought to pray for boldness that we may say the things that the world needs to hear even though it will offend them and cause many to hate us. We must elevate love for the souls of men over our love for self comfort and acceptance (see study # 30; Preaching to the Lost).
 2. Note that the "*signs and wonders*" were done "*through the name of ... Jesus*" and that "*thy word*" is connected to these signs and the name of Jesus. This is another illustration of the connection between the authority of Jesus with preaching and performing miracles (see Mk. 16:20).
- E. "*And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness*" (4:31).
1. This is the third mention of men being "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" (see Acts 2:4; 4:8; and 4:31). It seems obvious that it is the apostles under consideration seeing that they are the only ones to this point being mentioned as being "*filled with the Holy Spirit.*" We noted, in the two previous studies of this subject, that this was a miraculous event. This event gave the apostles knowledge and abilities that they did not originally have (see study # 26).

2. The apostles had prayed a prayer that was well pleasing to God because it met His objective for man. The approval of the prayer seems to be answered in a physical way; i.e., *“the place was shaken where in they were gathered.”* The experience of the miraculous shaking gave the apostles courage and boldness to speak the necessary things that would surely offend many Jews but save others. They were given a sign (i.e., the shaking) that gave them confidence and boldness to preach.

IV. Mutual care for all Disciples (4:32-37):

- A. *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common”* (4:32).
 1. Odd how that a *“multitude”* can be *“of one heart and soul.”* Often times we hear people speak of the “mystery of the godhead.” We hear people say that no one can explain how that three persons in the godhead can be one. Here in Acts; however, we see exactly how that three can be one. Luke records the fact that multitudes of people were one. The oneness is not physical but rather mentally and spiritually. Herein is unity defined. Jesus prayed for the oneness of his disciples at John 17 and here we see how this is achieved. The oneness that the godhead and Christians of like faith share is *“one heart and soul.”* Their purpose is one (see I Cor. 1:10; Rom. 15:4; Phil. 1:27) (see study # 20).
 2. The early Christians stuck together during a volatile spiritual time. Those who professed faith in Christ Jesus were threatened with being ostracized from the spiritual and civil authority of the Sanhedrin council, the Jewish synagogue and the entire Jewish life (see Jn. 12:42).
 3. The believing Christians came to compose their own company (Acts 4:23) and supported each other spiritually and physically. The hardships of one member of the church would become the hardships of them all. Burdens were gladly bore by fellow brothers and sisters in Christ (see study # 36; Christian Love for Others).
 4. These early believers were of *“one heart and soul... and had all things common”* (see study # 20).
- B. *“And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostle’s feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need”* (4:33-35).
 1. God continued to distribute power to the apostles that they may boldly preach truth and confirm these divine truths with divine miracles (Mk. 16:20).
 2. These early brethren were so concerned about each other’s physical well being that they were willing to give up their own comforts, lands, and homes so that their brethren would be cared for. Any who were in need were cared for. These needy brethren were so cared for that the word of God states that was none who *“lacked.”* Their attitude was “what is mine is yours” (see study # 36).
- C. *“And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet”* (4:36-37).
 1. We are introduced to Barnabas, the future traveling companion of the apostle Paul. Barnabas was a benevolent and caring man.
 2. Luke refers to Barnabas as *“Son of exhortation.”* The word *“exhortation”* (*paraklesis*) = “a persuader, one who incites others... cheering and supporting influence” (Moulton 303). Barnabas was one who knew God’s word and encouraged others to follow the Lord’s will. This character trait of persuading others in the name of the Lord was so apparent to the apostles that they surnamed him *“Barnabas”* which is interpreted as such. We are mindful of others who received names that illustrated their character. Jesus named James and John the *“sons of thunder”* for their militant disposition toward truth (see Mk. 3:17).
 3. Consider the fact that the collection of funds by the apostles infers a common treasury (see study # 31; Work and Worship of the Church).

Chapter 5

I. Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11):

- A. *“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet”* (5:1-2).
1. Luke gives us a picture of a day in the lives of the apostles and early church. While the church was growing and caring for each other they were not without internal issues. Note the conjunctive word *“but”* that begins chapter 5 and serves as a contrast between the generous brethren and Barnabas of chapter 4 and Ananias and Sapphira.
 2. Like Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira *“sold a possession”* that belonged to them so that needy brethren would be cared for. Their possession sold for a certain amount of which Ananias and Sapphira *“kept back part of the price”* for their own. That which remained was *“laid at the apostles’ feet.”*
 3. Notice the phrase, *“his wife also being privy to it.”* The word *“privy”* (*suneido*) = “to share in the knowledge of a thing” (Moulton 391). Sapphira had knowledge of the fact that a certain part of the money from the sale of the land was not given to the apostles for the needy.
 4. We have two hints that something is not right with Ananias and Sapphira’s gift for the needy:
 - a. First, there is the conjunction *“but”* between Barnabas’ gift and theirs.
 - b. Secondly, a part of the money from the sale is kept by Ananias and Sapphira. The comment regarding their decision is that Sapphira is *“privy”* (she shares in the agreement with Ananias to do this).
- B. *“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, did it not remain thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God”* (5:3-4).
1. The suspected problem with Ananias and Sapphira’s gift is now confirmed. Peter states that Ananias *“lied to the Holy Spirit... Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”* One obvious point is the identity of the Holy Spirit as God (see study # 32; The Identity of the Holy Spirit).
 2. This lie, that Ananias apparently told the apostles in relationship to the partial proceeds from the sale of a possession of his, was the work of *“Satan filling his heart.”* Satan had tempted Ananias and Sapphira to lie about the *“price of the land.”* Let us notice two things:
 - a. First, note that Satan *“filled”* the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit. To be *“filled”* (*pleroo*) = “to fill up or make full ... to pervade with an influence, to influence fully, possess fully” (Moulton 329) (see study # 37; Temptation).
 - b. Secondly, note that Ananias is accused of *“conceiving this thing in thy heart.”* To *“conceive”* (*iithemi*) = “to design, lay to heart, ponder, resolve” (Moulton 404)... “to deposit, to put or plant it in his heart... to place to account, put down, reckon...” (LS 806).
 3. Ananias designed a plan in his heart that was influenced by Satan (see study # 33; The Work of Satan). That plan was to lie to the Apostles about the money that was being laid at their feet. Note that Peter explains to Ananias that before the land was sold it was his possession and after the land was sold it was his possession. The inference is that he was at liberty to do with the proceeds of the sale as he saw fit. Ananias decides to lie about the money to the apostles.
- C. *“And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him”* (5:5-6).
1. The death of Ananias is directly related to his error of lying to the apostles about the money he gave them from the sale of his property. It is apparent that Ananias desired to keep part of the money for his self yet tell the apostles that the money he did give was the total proceeds from the sale. Why would he do this?
 - a. Satan had filled Ananias’ heart with greed and the need to be viewed by his brethren as pious.
 - b. **The lesson is obvious:** When we do things for show rather than out of the sincerity of our hearts we may fool men but never shall we fool God. If Ananias and his wife needed part of

the money for their own use they should have been honest with the apostles. They should have given what they could and held back a portion for their own use. This would have been ok to do as Peter explains. But, the two attempt a scheme that would bring them the glory of having given all the proceeds while keeping some money for themselves (the best of both worlds in the view of Ananias). Honesty and sincerity is always the best policy (see study # 34; Honesty and Sincerity).

2. Ananias lost his life for his error in judgment. Seems odd how erroneous decisions can wind up costing man so much. Note the consequences for Ananias' sinful act was that "*great fear came upon all that heard it.*" When the brethren heard that Ananias lost his life because he tried to lie about the amount of money he laid at the apostles' feet people were fearful. How many times were they tempted to do the same thing? What if they had done this thing? Surely God is powerful and has no tolerance for the wicked schemes of men. The event of Ananias and Sapphira gained the fearful attention of the people.
- D. "*And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in*" (5:7).
1. Apparently Ananias had taken the gift and laid it at the apostles' feet alone. Three hours pass and his wife is likely concerned about his whereabouts. Sapphira comes to the drop off location to look for her husband.
 2. Sapphira has no idea that her husband has died.
- E. "*And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much*" (5:8).
1. Now all speculations regarding the details of the sale of the land are exposed. Ananias and Sapphira sold their land, determined to give the money to the needy, and Satan fills their heart to design a sinful plan. The plan was to take part of the money to the apostles and claim that it was the whole amount for the land.
 2. Peter gives Sapphira the opportunity to make things right. She should have confessed her and her husband's error yet she too lies about the money.
- F. "*But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out*" (5:9).
1. Peter exposes Sapphira's part in scheming with her husband regarding the price of the land they sold. Her involvement in this plan cost her life too.
 2. Note that Peter explains the event as a "*trying of the Spirit of the Lord.*" Did Ananias and Sapphira honestly believe that they could lie about the amount of money and not bear any consequences from God? Did they have such a small conception of God that they did not think that He would care, notice, or do anything about it?
 3. When man "*tries*" (*peirazo*) God they "let trial be made... to make proof or trial of" (LS 616). While Ananias and Sapphira did not say within their mind, "Let us see if God will know of our designed plan to hold back some of the money while telling the apostles that it is the whole sum," they nonetheless acted in this manner. When man sins he must realize that God will not be fooled. **Man's words and actions are laid naked before the eyes of the Almighty and omniscient God** (see Heb. 4:13). When man contemplates the transparency of all actions, words, and thoughts it is indeed a fearful thing (see study # 35; God's Omniscience).
- G. "*And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things*" (5:10-11).
1. The consequence of a rebellious heart is the same for one as the other. God does not prefer females over males and neither does he prefer any race of people. It is the just that God prefers.
 2. Once again we find that great "*fear*" came upon the whole church. People began to realize the magnitude of God's power. Not only could he heal man's ailments but he knows what we are all thinking. Like it or not, our lives and minds are known by God. It is fearful to know that the supreme divine being that we give answer to can see into our mind and we can hide nothing from Him.

3. Note that for the first time the word church is used in reference to the baptized believers. This is proof that the church was not established before the day of Pentecost but rather after it.

II. The Apostles go throughout Jerusalem Preaching and Healing (5:12-16):

- A. *“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people: and they were all with **one accord** in Solomon’s porch”* (5:12).
 1. The apostles had prayed for a spirit of boldness to speak in the name of Jesus Christ because the Sanhedrin Council had threatened them not to do this anymore (see Acts 4:17-18, 29). God was stretching forth His hand to heal people and perform signs and wonders *“by the hands of the apostles”* (see Acts 4:30). The performance of miracles illustrated the authoritative power of Jesus Christ as he worked through the apostles (see Acts 1:8; 4:7-10; Mk. 9:1).
 2. Note that for the fourth time now we find the apostles and or Christians in *“one accord”* (see also Acts 1:14; 2:46; and 4:24). The term *“one accord”* (*homothumadon*) = “with one mind, with one accord, unanimously [see Rom. 15:4]” (Moulton 288). The basis of their unanimity was the word of God (see Acts 2:42ff) (see study # 20).
 3. We discussed Solomon’s porch at Acts 3:11. Solomon’s porch (porticoes) was the wall (or porch) due east of the temple proper. The Beautiful Gate would have looked outward to Solomon’s porch. Between the Beautiful Gate and Solomon’s porch was the Court of Gentiles. This porch was the apparent meeting place for the apostles {it may be that the entire church assembled here}.
- B. *“But of the rest durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people magnified them; and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women:”* (5:13-14).
 1. The general public witnessed the healings, signs and miracles. The general public had heard of the fearful things that had occurred among the apostles, in the name of the Lord, and thereby chose not to *“join”* themselves to the group of Christians (see Acts 5:11).
 2. There are two issues here:
 - a. First, we are to take note of the obvious distinction between those of *“one accord”* (Acts 5:12-13) and *“the rest”* (Acts 5:13). The book of Acts is helping us understand the distinction between the saved and unsaved, those in fellowship with God and those out of fellowship with God, and those who share in fellowship with fellow faithful Christians and those who do not (see Acts 2:40-47; 3:19-23; 4:11, 23, 32; 5:13) (see study # 39; Sanctified Saints).
 - b. Secondly, we find unhealthy fear again (see Acts 5:11). People can be afraid of God yet gain no benefits from this fear because they are not moved to obedience. A great example of how fear alone saves no one is found in Joshua. While the Canaanites’ hearts melted with fear of God that fear only saved Rahab whose fear gave way to faith (see Josh. 2:8; 5:1; Heb. 11:31). Fear alone saves no one (Matt. 25:14-30). As faith without obedience is dead even so fear without obedience is dead (see James 2:14). We may also say here that love without obedience to God’s word is dead (see I Jn. 3:17).
 - c. Thirdly, as Rahab’s fear gave way to faith even so *“multitudes both of men and women,”* on this occasion, gave heed to the gospel message and were *“added to the Lord.”* Those *“added to the Lord”* were those who heard, believed, confessed the name of Christ, repented of sins, were baptized and sought out a godly life through obedience to the apostles teaching (see Acts 2:41-42). The three thousand turned to five thousand and the five thousand turned to *“multitudes of men and women.”* The church was growing by leaps and bounds. There assembly in Jerusalem must have created such an attraction that no one could miss (see study # 38; Church Growth).
- C. *“insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one”* (5:15-16).
 1. Peter has repeatedly come to the forefront of the apostles in the early pages of Acts. He was the spokesman on Pentecost and the one who seemed to speak for both he and John as they were on trial.
 2. One so actively involved in the work of the Lord would certainly be sought out by the people. News of the miraculous healing of people who had been lame from birth brought the lame out of

the woodwork of Jerusalem. Who could possibly sit back in their homes while news of real and divine healing spread? People wanted to be healed and once healed they desired to give God the glory.

III. The Apostles are once again Imprisoned / miraculously escape / and are put on Trial (5:17-32):

- A. *“But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy, and laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward”* (5:17-18).
1. Let us recall that it was the high priest (Annas and Caiaphas) that had previously apprehended and jailed Peter and John for preaching Jesus and performing miracles in His name (Acts 4:1-3, 5ff). Luke tells us that these high officials could not deny the fact that real live miracles were being performed (Acts 4:16). We noted that these men’s hearts were so hardened against Jesus that they tried to suppress the event and charged the apostles not to preach or perform miracles in the name of Jesus any longer (Acts 4:17-18). Peter tells them on that occasion that all mankind is to obey God’s will rather than man’s (Acts 4:19-20).
 2. We had previously asked the question, “Why did these Jewish officials deny Christ in the face of such obvious miracles?” At the notes above (Acts 4:13ff) we saw that pride, the fact that Jesus did not meet their expectations as a king, and their love for the glory of man rather than the glory of God were the Jews primary problems. Here we find that “*jealousy*” was a part of their problems with Jesus and his apostles. When the high priest saw that the multitudes ran after the apostles it caused them to be jealous. They wanted the multitudes to run after them. Such a state of mind is sinful because it accentuates self interest over the eternal life (see Matt. 21:15-16; Gal. 5:20). We may ask the question today, “**Why do men and women reject the Christ?**” (see study # 39) The answer may be the same: **First**, Jesus does not meet their expectations (most believe Jesus to be all love and never condemning). **Secondly**, to accept Christ and his laws is to be different than everyone around you. Such a decision may affect your entire life (i.e., work, friends, and even family). Most love the glory and favor of man than the glory and favor of God. **Thirdly**, we find jealousy being named. To accept Christ and submit myself to him means that I am not the big shot of the religious world. **Fourthly**, we find that people have a fear of God but it is not according to knowledge and obedience (see Acts 2:43; 5:11-13). **Fifthly**, there are many who are just not willing to give God the time of day (see Acts 2:12) (see study # 40; Why People Reject Christ).
- B. *“But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life”* (5:19-20).
1. Miraculously the apostles are released from their prison cell by an angel of the Lord. Such an event should have struck terror into the hearts of the Jewish officials yet as we shall see their hearts are hardened further each step of the way, like Pharaoh’s, until the Lord’s will be done. These wicked men will come to persecute not only the apostles but also all who call upon the name of the Lord. The more God openly did the more they grew angry and tried to fight against the Lord (see Acts 5:39). We may say that this is the **sixth** reason men and women reject the Christ. Their hearts are hardened more and more as they hear of Jesus and his laws.
 2. The angel commands the apostles to continue their preaching even though they have been threatened and imprisoned. That which they were to preach was “*all the words of this life.*” All words that would put this life into perspective, as to its eternal design, were to be spoken. The apostles confer and obey.
- C. *“And when they heard this, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought, But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this would grow”* (5:21-24).
1. While the apostles were obeying the angel’s command to preach the Sanhedrin council and senate of the children of Israel were gathering to try them.
 2. When the apostles were sought out at the prison and not found, though being heavily guarded, the Jews were perplexed. Rather than acknowledging God’s miraculous involvement in their escape

- they seek, once again, to suppress the news of such an event (see also Acts 4:17). Again, we ask, why would they do this? The answer is found in the six reasons listed above.
3. Try as they may the gospel message would not be suppressed. Today, many false teachers and lovers of this world try to suppress the good news of a hereafter; however, the gospel will never be kept bound in the prisons of man (see II Tim. 2:8-9) (see study # 41; Wicked men's attempts to suppress the Gospel).
- D. *“And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, but without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned”* (5:25-26).
1. While the high priest and other Jewish officials were seeking means whereby they may suppress the news of a miraculous escape a messenger comes and tells them where the apostles are. The messenger states that these men are in the temple preaching Jesus. The council is not only befuddled but severely irritated at the news of these apostles doing the very thing that they had charged them not to do.
 2. The council, being wary of the people's view of the apostles, sent for them without violence lest they would be stoned to death. To apprehend and charge prophets who were preaching and performing miracles in the name of the Lord would have been a high form of radical behavior against God. The multitudes would not stand for it. Care had to be taken in apprehending these men. Apparently the apostles voluntarily go with the captain and officers.
- E. *“And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us”* (5:27-28).
1. Once again the Apostles are on trial in the Sanhedrin court.
 2. The high priest delivers a **three part accusation**:
 - a. **First**, the high priest states that the Apostles were *“strictly charged not to teach in this name”* (see Acts 4:17-21). The point being that the apostles stand in violation of the civil and religious authority of the city of Jerusalem (i.e., they have disobeyed a directive from the governing power).
 - b. **Secondly**, the high priest states, *“ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.”* While the council could not deny that miracles had been performed in the name of Christ they did reject the idea that the Apostles' teachings were of a divine origin. The high priest refers to the teaching as being *“your teaching”* rather than *“Christ's teaching.”*
 - c. **Thirdly**, the high priest charges the apostles with attempting to *“bring this man's blood* (i.e., Christ's) *upon us.”* The Sanhedrin council is fearful that with such authoritative preaching and performing of divine miracles to substantiate the teaching that they would soon be seen as the true villains. Were they admitting their belief that Jesus was the Christ or were they simply saying that said preaching and miracles would convince others of the identity of Jesus? It seems most likely that they wanted this teaching and the miracles stopped not because of their own faith but because people were beginning to believe and the more who believed the more who convicted members of the council of murdering the Lord.
- F. *“But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men”* (5:29).
1. Peter is unfazed by the three accusations of the Sanhedrin council. Though the Jewish council did charge them not to speak in the name of Christ, though such preaching has indeed filled all Jerusalem, and though this preaching will surely bring the blood of Christ upon the hands of the council the apostles will not stop preaching in his name.
 2. The matter brought to the apostle's attention was one of utmost importance because the Lord had commanded them to go and teach (see Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 4:18-20). The Lord also miraculously empowered them to do so (see Acts 1:8). The consequential statement is, *“We must obey God rather than man.”* What will you and I do today? While the preaching of the gospel hardens, irritates, brings reproach and persecution to the teacher, and often alienates one we must obey God (see study # 30)!
- G. *“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we*

are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (5:30-32).

1. The council is fearful that the guilt of Christ’s spilled blood would be put upon them. This is somewhat odd seeing that they had earlier showed no care at all (see Matt. 27:24-25). Peter confirms their fears by boldly stating that they are indeed guilty of “*slewing the Lord by hanging him on a tree*” (see also Acts 4:5, 10). By the hands of “*lawless*” (Acts 2:23) and “*ignorant*” (Acts 4:17) men (the Jews and council being addressed) the Lord was crucified.
2. Peter has boldly turned the accusations back to the council. They had accused Peter and the Apostles of violating civil law and Peter accuses them of violating divine law! They murdered the Lord of glory. Yet this death was not permanent and neither was it without God’s foreordination (see Acts 4:27-28). The crucified Christ had been resurrected from the dead and exalted to a position of the right hand of God as a Prince and Savior. Peter and the rest of the apostles were witnesses of this resurrected Christ whom the Jews murdered. Their witness was confirmed to be true by the very miracles performed. These very miracles were not denied by this council (see Acts 4:16). These men have begun by putting Peter and the apostles on trial but Peter has effectively put them on trial and found them guilty. What will they do?
3. Not only did the Apostles witness the resurrection of Christ but also the Holy Spirit. Two witnesses, according to divine law, established truth (see Matt. 18:16; Deut. 19:15ff).
4. The Holy Spirit, who witnessed the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, is “*given to them that obey him.*” What does it mean to have the Holy Spirit “*given to them that obey him?*”
 - a. Those who have **obeyed** God are those who have heard, believed, confessed Christ, repented of sins, baptized for the forgiveness of sins, and are living faithfully to God. God demands said obedience (see Acts 5:29; I Pet. 4:17) (see study # 44; Have you obeyed the Gospel?).
 - b. The **work of the Holy Spirit** is the sanctification of mankind through the distribution of the gospel message (see Jn. 16:8ff). When man recognizes his sinful state and calls upon the name of God for help he is given aid through the gospel message (it instructs man to obedience and contact with the blood of Christ for forgiveness through the act of baptism). Those who search out such truths shall surely be given the Holy Spirit (Lk. 11:13).
 - c. When one searches out truth and by the work of the Holy Spirit finds it and obeys it they will be given the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** (I Jn. 4:13). Such a one is guided by truth (Rom. 8:1-14).
 - d. Understanding the work and indwelling of the Holy Spirit helps us understand what it means to have the Holy Spirit “*given to them that obey him.*” If the Holy Spirit’s work involves sanctification through **truth** and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit indicates one that is guided by **truth** it stands to reason that when the scriptures state that one has been given the Holy Spirit it simply means that one has received the truth (see Jn. 14:15-17; Acts 15:6-9; II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; I Thess. 4:7-8; Heb. 6:4-5). When such a statement is made some make the accusation that Church of Christ people claim that the Holy Spirit is the truth. Rather than saying that the Holy Spirit is the truth the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is metonymically associated to the truth. Our Lord Jesus is metonymically associated with truth too (see Col. 1:25-27). Another way of seeing this is the relationship between Christians and Christ. When the world hears and sees the Christian they are seeing Christ (Jn. 17:21-23; Gal. 2:20). Truth is that which connects many into one and that which identifies the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as dwelling in the Christian. Remember, the Holy Spirit is not the truth but the truth is the Holy Spirit’s work (see study # 42; Work of the Holy Spirit). For a complete discussion of the identity, work, indwelling, baptism, and gift of the Holy Spirit see “Holy Spirit” appendix at the conclusion of this study.

IV. The Sanhedrin’s response to Peter’s Defense (5:33-42):

- A. “*But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them*” (5:33).
 1. Peter has reversed the trial and placed the guilt of Christ’s death squarely upon the council’s shoulders. Men whose hearts are hardened against Christ, filled with jealousy and pride are only spurred to greater anger. To be “*cut to the heart*” (*diaprio*) is a different word than that used at Acts 2:37 (i.e., “*pricked in the heart*” which meant to experience pain and anguish in one’s heart).

- The Greek word *diaprio* is defined as “to grate the teeth in rage; to be cut to the heart, to be enraged” (Moulton 94). This same word is used again at Acts 7:54.
2. The level of rage in the hearts of the council is indicated by the fact that they were ready to kill the apostles for putting them on trial. The very gall of one to speak such a way to them was more than they could handle.
- B.** *“But there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honor of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while”* (5:34).
1. The identity of Gamaliel:
 - a. A member of the Sanhedrin Council.
 - b. A Pharisee
 - c. A doctor of the law
 - d. Held in honor and respect among the people of Jerusalem.
 - e. One who tutored Saul of Tarsus (see Acts 22:3).
 2. Gamaliel, seeing that something very bad was about to happen, commanded that the apostles be taken out of the council’s company. Such a move allowed him to reason with these men who had apparently lost their reasoning in a fit of rage.
- C.** *“And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do”* (5:35).
1. The scene is one of rage and anger. A council that is out of control because of the condemning words of Peter.
 2. Gamaliel, a man respected and honored by all, calms the scene and ask a question of rationality. The honored Pharisee asks the council to consider all the consequences of going through with their rage against the apostles.
- D.** *“For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, and came to nought”* (5:36).
1. Gamaliel reminds the council of previous men who gained a following because of religious claims. The first example he calls to their remembrance was Theudas who gained a four hundred man following.
 2. “Josephus described Theudas as a self-proclaimed prophet who deluded ‘the majority of the masses’ (four hundred men according to Acts) with his promise to divide the Jordan River upon command so that the people could cross with ease, thus repeating the miracle performed by Joshua. The attack of a Roman cavalry regiment soon brought an end to the uprising, however, and many in the movement were either slain or captured. Theudas himself was decapitated” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 838).
 3. Gamaliel reminds the council that such men’s work comes to nought because they are not really representing God.
- E.** *“After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment, and drew away some of the people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad”* (5:37).
1. Gamaliel then reminds the council of Judas of Galilee. “Mentioned in Acts 5:37 as the leader of an insurrection occasioned by the census of Quirinius in A.D. 7. It is said that he and those who obeyed him perished in that revolt. Josephus also repeatedly mentions judas by this same name, ‘the Galilean,’ and speaks of his revolt (Ant. Xvii.1.6 [23]; xx.5.2 [102] etc., but in Ant. Xvii.1.1 [4] he names him a Gaulanite of the city of Gamala. As Gamala was in Gaulanitis, not far from the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, it may be regarded as belonging to that province. The party of Judas seems to have been identified with the Zealots” (ISBE v. 2, pp. 1151).
 2. Gamaliel’s point was that these imposters work came to nought as well.
- F.** *“And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God”* (5:38-39).
1. Gamaliel’s advice is sound reasoning. The honored Pharisee suggest that the council refrain from doing the apostles harm because if they are likened unto the previous religious leaders, who led some astray, their work and lives will soon end at the hands of the Roman government.

2. Gamaliel also reminds the council that if indeed the apostle's work is truly of God then there is nothing man can do to stop their preaching and teaching. Those who try to hinder their work will be fighting a hopeless battle against God.
- G. *“And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go”* (5:40).
1. The agreement to refrain from doing the apostles harm did not include beating them. The punishment of beating them was justified in their minds because they had disobeyed a directive of the council not to preach in the name of Jesus. To simply let them go without punishment would be to admit their faith in Jesus too. To remain justified in the public's eyes for apprehending the apostles the council commands that these men be beaten.
 2. Not only did the council beat the apostles but they once again charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus. This is now the third time that the apostles have been warned.
- H. *“They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name”* (5:41).
1. The apostles, no doubt, remembered the words of Jesus regarding their ill treatment due to the message they would preach. Jesus said, *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles...”* (Matt. 10:16-18). This was the first of many beatings, ill treatment, and even death for most of the apostles as they stood upon the truths of God's word and convicted sinners of their wicked ways (see I Cor. 4:9-13) (see study # 45; Persecution).
 2. Knowing the admonition of Christ, regarding this matter, they left the company of the council rejoicing in their hearts because they had *“suffered dishonor for the Name.”* Though the public would view the apostles' actions as dishonorable God approved.
- I. *“And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ”* (5:42).
1. The apostles immediately go out preaching Jesus after they were beaten for disobeying the civil and religious authority regarding this very matter.
 2. Some have unfortunately misunderstood this scene to encourage an attitude against civil and religious authority. God does not approve of those who do not respect authority (see Jude 7-8). The Lord teaches us that we are to respect the governing authorities (see Rom. 13:1ff) and honor the king of our land (see I Pet. 2:17). The Lord never, however, commends civil law keeping at the expense of His divine will (see Acts 5:29) (see study # 43; The Christian and our Civil Government).

Chapter 6

I. The First Deacons of the Church are Appointed (6:1-7):

- A. *“Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations”* (6:1).
1. *“These days”* were obviously days that closely followed the day of Pentecost. Due to miracles being performed and the preaching that followed people were obeying the gospel (Acts 3:6-10; 5:12-15, 32). The church was growing quickly (see Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1).
 2. With great numbers come issues. A *“distribution”* of money and goods was apparently being made *“daily”* to care for the needy among the saints (compare Acts 4:34-35 with 6:1). Many of these needy were the Grecian and Hebrew widows. A dispute arises over the daily distribution of these goods because the Grecian Jewish widows were being neglected. The result of this neglect was that the Grecian Jews began to murmur (complain) against the Hebrew Jews. Apparently the Hebrew Jewish widows were being administered to and they were not. What was the difference between a *“Grecian Jew”* and the *“Hebrews?”* The word study below signifies that the difference

was not in their blood ancestry but rather their current birth place and language used. Jews born in Palestine and that had maintained the Hebrew Language were recognized as being different than their Greek speaking brothers who came from other countries.

- a. “*Grecian*” (*Hellenistes*) = “one who uses the language and follows the customs of the Greeks; in N.T. a Jew by blood, but a native of a Greek-speaking country” (Moulton 133).
 - b. “*Hebrews*” (*Hebraios*) = “a Hebrew, one descended from Abraham the Hebrew... a Jew of Palestine” (Moulton 111).
3. Interestingly, we find no other mention of a “*daily ministration*” or a laying of funds at the apostles’ feet. We do read; however, of a “*first day of the week collection*” (I Cor. 16:1-2). Within these mentioned verses we see the principles of laying by in store upon the first day of the week (i.e., the contribution into the church treasury is inferred). Christians in these early days of the church not only did so liberally but cheerfully so that all aspects of the work of the church may be taken care of (see II Cor. 9:6-7) (see study # 31).
- B. “*And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables*” (6:2).
1. When this dispute occurred the apostles knew that the numbers of the disciples had grown so much that they would not possibly be able to continue to be involved in the daily ministration of aiding all those Christians who were in need.
 2. A meeting is called and it is determined that they could not “*forsake the word of God, and serve tables.*” The word study below illustrates a distinct work of collecting and distributing funds to those who were in need among the saints.
 - a. To “*forsake*” (*kataleipo*) = “to leave behind; to neglect” (Moulton 217). The work of having saints bring their money to the apostles’ feet and then the apostles distributing these collections to needy saints was overly time consuming. Such work left no time for “*the word of God*” i.e., preaching and teaching.
 - b. The phrase “*serve*” (*diakoneo*) = “to wait, attend upon, serve... to be an attendant or assistant... to minister to, relieve, assist, or supply with the necessities of life, provide the means of living... to fill the office of *diakonos*, deacon, perform the duties of deacon” (Moulton 92).
 - c. The word “*tables*” (*trapeze*) = “a table, an eating table, a table or counter of a moneychanger, a bank... money matters” (Moulton 407).
- C. “*Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business*” (6:3).
1. The apostles determine to appoint seven men who were “*full of the Spirit*” (i.e., guided by truth in their lives) and “*wisdom*” (i.e., the ability to apply truths in their lives). These seven men would serve in the collection and distribution of money.
 2. The question arises as to whether these seven men were the first appointed deacons in the church. Consider the fact that the definition for the Greek word *diakoneo* as used here in Acts 6:2 is the same as Greek words used at I Timothy 3:8, 10, 12, 13 and Philippians 1:1. By definition the office must find its origin here in Acts 6:1. What else could Luke be revealing here? We are reading and watching the formation of the early church and a part of its growth demanded servants (deacons) to serve various needs that arose among the members (see study # 46; Deacons in the Church). See also the appendix at the end of this study over the development of Church functions such as its work and organization.
- D. “*But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word*” (6:4).
1. The decision had been made by the divinely inspired apostles (i.e., it was done with God’s approval). Deacons would serve in collecting, banking, and distributing funds as they were needed.
 2. The apostles would continue to do the work of preaching or “*ministry*” (*diakonia*) in the word of God. Note that the use of the Greek word *diakonia* in relation to the apostles’ work illustrates that there is a distinct work and service among the Lord’s church members in these early days.
- E. “*And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a*

proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them” (6:5-6).

1. The multitude of saints apparently chose these first deacons (see study # 46). Their qualifications were stated at Acts 6:3:
 - a. These deacons were to be “*men*” (no women are mentioned). We may look to the use of three Greek nouns used for the official office of a deacon in the NT (i.e., I Tim. 3:8, 12; Phil. 1:1) and find that they are always parsed as masculine. Those who serve in this capacity must be male.
 - b. Secondly, these deacons were to be from “*among you*” (i.e., saints of that given locality).
 - c. Thirdly, these men must be of a “*good report*” (*martureo*) = “to be the subject of testimony, to obtain attestation to character” (Moulton 258). Men who served in this capacity had to be known by the saints as those of impeccable character. The apostle Paul writes of the qualifications of deacons saying, “*And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless*” (I Tim. 3:10).
 - d. Fourthly, the deacons were to be men “*full of the Spirit and wisdom.*” Note that these men were to be known as being filled with the Spirit and Wisdom before the apostles laid their hands upon them to miraculously empower them to do the work at hand. The state of being “*full of the Spirit and wisdom*” is thereby the idea of not only having knowledge of truth but a reputation of being guided by truth. The Apostle Paul again wrote of deacons saying that they are to “*Hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience*” (I Tim. 3:9).
 2. The Christians were pleased with the apostles’ decision and stated qualifications and thereby select seven men whose names are given. It seems significant that seven would be chosen. The Bible uses numbers in calculated ways to signify various things (especially in the book of Revelation). The number seven has been noted as representing perfection. The significance here is not known other than the fact that it was a job too large for one or even six and too small for eight.
 3. Note also that one of the seven men, Nicolaus, was a “*proselyte*” of Antioch. The word “*proselyte*” (*proselutos*) = “a new comer, a stranger; in N.T. a proselyte, convert from paganism to Judaism” (Moulton 348). Though Nicolaus was once a pagan idolater he now belonged to Christ. Nicolaus made evidence his new faith in his day to day life so that all took note and agreed that he should be a servant that ministered unto tables. Truly the gospel cleanses ALL men of ALL sin (I John 1:7).
 4. There seems to be an apparent ceremony to induct these seven men into the office of one who would serve tables. The induction process included prayers and the laying on of the apostles’ hands. The act of laying on of hands transferred power from the Holy Spirit unto these men (see Acts 8:17-19; 19:6).
- F. “*And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*” (6:7).
1. Due to the apostles leaving the word of daily ministration and distribution to the deacons they were free to preach. The consequence of their preaching was that “*the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly...*” This is now the fifth mention of church growth in the book of Acts (see Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1). The number 5,000 was the last identifiable number used to reveal how many the “*multitudes*” were (Acts 4:4). If multitudes were added to these 5,000 at Acts 5:14, 6:1, and 6:7 it is no wonder that the word “*exceedingly*” is used to illustrate the thousands of members of the body of Christ (see study # 38).
 2. Notice also that a “*great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*” These men are specifically mentioned, as was Nicolaus, because they gave up things that others did not experience.
 3. The term “*obedient to the faith*” is telling. So many today want to tell us that faith is all that is required to be saved by Jesus. The scriptures; however, are very clear on this subject. Luke associates obedience with faith here as does Jesus (Jn. 3:36), the apostle Paul (Romans 6:16), and the apostle Peter (Acts 5:32 and I Peter 4:17). To believe is to obey the gospel message (Heb. 11:1ff) (see study # 44).

II. Stephen is falsely Accused and Tried (6:8-15)

- A. “*And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people*” (6:8).

1. Stephen was “*full of grace and power*” in that he was given miraculous knowledge and power to perform miracles through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles.
2. The miraculous power is described as “*great wonders and signs*” (see Acts 2:22 for word study).
- B. “*But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen*” (6:9).
 1. Once again we find the conjunction word “*but*” that signifies a distinct contrast or difference between Stephen (a saint of God) and men of the world (see study # 39).
 2. The identity of the “*Synagogue of the Libertines*” is discussed in volume 2 page 360 of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Danker states, “It was customary in antiquity for people of similar backgrounds and interests to form clubs or associations, often with a component of religious ceremony. The so-called synagogue of freedmen might well have owed its origin to Jews who had been taken as prisoners of war to Rome in the time of Pompey (63 B.C.). After their liberation they formed a colony on the banks of the Tiber... Many would naturally have sought refuge in Jerusalem and formed a synagogue there.”¹ The “*Cyrenians*” (Jews from Cyrene Africa), “*Alexandrians*” (Jews from Alexandria, the capital of Egypt), “*Cilicia*” (Jews from the southeast corner of Asia Minor), and “*Asia*” (Jews from the area west of Asia Minor whose capital was Ephesus) are mentioned as having common synagogues in Palestine.
 3. Five different synagogue groups “*disputed*” (*suzeteo*) with Stephen over Jesus and the Mosaic Law. The Greek word *suzeteo* = “to search or examine together with another, to dispute with a person” (LS 757).
- C. “*And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake*” (6:10).
 1. To “*withstand*” (*anthistemi*) = “to oppose, resist, stand out against” (Moulton 30)... “To stand against, esp. in battle, to withstand, oppose... to make a stand” (LS 70-71). The scene is one of obvious battle. Men from five Jewish synagogues are in verbal battle with Stephen over the issue of whether the Mosaic Law has been abrogated and Christ reigns supremely in His kingdom.
 2. These synagogues were no match for Stephen because he was filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit. Stephen precisely exposed their erroneous thinking.
- D. “*Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God*” (6:11).
 1. To “*suborn*” (*hupoballo*) = “to make false suggestions... to throw, put or lay under” (LS 841). The phrase “threw him under the bus” is used today to indicate a false accusation to hurt someone. Stephen was thrown under the bus by his Jewish kinsmen in that they found worthless men to make false suggestions about him.
 2. The false suggestion was that Stephen had spoken “*blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*” Stephen’s words were not against Moses or God but these men so charged him.
- E. “*And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council*” (6:12).
 1. These worthless men stirred up the people, elders, and scribes against Stephen by telling them that he spoke words against Moses and God. Stephen was accused of being a false teacher. Such charges were very serious and could mean that such a one would be worthy of death (see Deut. 13:10). Stephen is thereby seized by these worthless Jews and they bring him to the council.
 2. We are given a picture of religious and civil life in Palestine. Religiously there were a multitude of synagogues and as far as civil government went the Jews had the Sanhedrin council.
- F. “*and set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceases not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us*” (6:14).
 1. This accusation ought to sound familiar to us. Jesus was accused of the same thing in relation to the Mosaic Law (Matt. 5:17; Mk. 2:24; Jn. 5:16ff) and the temple (see Matt. 26:57-68). Stephen was apparently preaching about the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple as the Lord had prophesied (see Matt. 24:1-2).

¹ Danker, F. W. ISBE; vol. 2; pg. 360

2. As Stephen preached the gospel of the kingdom of God the people did not understand nor desire the necessary abrogation of the Mosaic Law. Stephen's words were thereby funneled into a bottle of ignorance, irritation, and rejection.
- G. *"And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel"* (6:15).
1. The Sanhedrin council members fasten their eyes upon Stephen partly out of disgust and partly out of amazement.
 2. They were disgusted with him because he was preaching the very message (i.e., Jesus) that the apostles were commanded to not speak about (see Acts 4:17-18; 5:28, 40). The council was probably gazing at him also in an inquisitive way. Stephen's face was as the *"face of an angel."* Stephen's face had a physical supernatural radiance and power about it that caused the council to stop and gaze at him in amazement. Once again we are reminded of how that when man's conscience is seared over with a hot iron of obstinacy and pride there seems to be nothing that can repair it (I Tim. 4:2). What amazes us is that the evidences are mounting up to the ridiculous level. These men have witnessed the miraculous power of Jesus (Acts 2:22), the miraculous tongue speaking on the part of the Apostles on Pentecost (Acts 2:4, 6, 12-13), the miraculous healing of the lame man (Acts 3:6; 4:14-16), and now they witness the miraculous face of Stephen as it appeared angelic. The lesson is that some men and women will in no way accept the truth. Said people will never be given nor obey the Holy Spirit (see Acts 5:32) (see study # 47; Hard Hearts).

Chapter 7

I. Stephen's Defense (7:1-19): Stephen Reminds the Council of God's Promises

- A. *"And the high priest said, Are these things so? And he said, Brethren and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, God removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell"* (7:1-4).
1. Stephen has been charged with speaking blasphemous words against God, Moses, the holy temple, and the law... witnesses have said that Stephen taught the people that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple and change the customs which Moses delivered unto us (see Acts 5:11-14).
 2. Steven's defense brought the members of the council all the way back to their beginnings (for the third time the council is going to be taught the gospel / see Acts 4:5ff; 5:30ff; 7:1ff).
 3. Let us consider a few things about these verses. Moses wrote, *"And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran"* (Gen. 11:26). God called upon Abraham to leave Mesopotamia (Ur of the Chaldees) before he dwelt in Haran (Acts 7:2). God called upon Abraham again, at the age of 75, to leave Haran (Gen. 12:1, 4) and he obeyed the voice of God not knowing where he was going (Heb. 11:8). While in Haran, Terah dies at the age of 145 years old (so one would think). The Bible tells us that Terah was 205 years old when he died (Gen. 11:32). Stephen states that Terah died before Abraham left Haran (Acts 7:4). How did Abraham leave Haran at the age of 75 when the Stephen states that his father died before he left Haran? If Terah was 70 when he had Abraham wouldn't he now be 145 years old seeing that Abraham is now 75? Though some would claim to find inconsistency and thereby champion skepticism we must consider that all the facts have not been given to us. Terah had three sons as stated above (see Gen. 11:26). Terah could have in no way had all three sons in one year (unless they were triplets). It is likely that Terah began having sons at the age of 70 and did not have Abraham until he was 130 years old (130 plus 75 [the age of Abraham] plus 70 [the age of Terah when he first had a son] equals 205 {the age of Terah at death in Haran}).
 4. **Stephen reminds the Sanhedrin council that the land they now dwell in is due to their father Abraham being called of God to come to Canaan.**
- B. *"and he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child"* (7:5).

1. Though Abraham traveled to and dwelt in Canaan it did not belong to him (see Gen. 13:1ff).
 2. God promised; however, that He would give this land to Abraham and his seed after him. At this time Abraham did not even have a child. This initial promise is found at Genesis 12:1ff and is a thematic point of the entire Bible message. God would save man through the seed of Abraham (i.e., Jesus). Stephen is bringing the council's minds back to God's original promise to His people. Let us remember that the apostles had prayed regarding God's foreordination of world history at Acts 4:28. God has always been in control of man's potential eternity.
- C. *“And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and treat them ill, four hundred years. And the nation to which they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place”* (7:6-7).
1. Stephen reminds the council that God had foretold of Israel's bondage in Egypt for four hundred years (Gen. 15:13) and so it was (see Ex. 12:40-41).
 2. Egypt was judged by God for their idolatry and wickedness and so they perished in the plagues and in the Red Sea. God showed the world His great power, authority, and divinity (see Rom. 9).
- D. *“And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs”* (7:8).
1. Stephen reminds the Sanhedrin council of the covenant of circumcision that God made with Abraham. God promised Abraham that his seed would become a great nation, eventually possess Canaan, and eventually be a blessing to all nations (through the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus Christ / see Gal. 3:8, 16).
 2. The seal or sign of this covenant promise was circumcision. Eight days after the birth of a male child he was to be circumcised (Gen. 17:9-14). Said act was an outward act of one's inward intentions to obey all that God had commanded (see Gen. 18:19). Those who were not circumcised were to be *“cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant”* (Gen. 17:14). Likewise today, God commands Baptism to wash away thy sins (Acts 22:16). Those who are not baptized for the remission of sins have their sins remaining. Circumcision was an act that signified a cutting away of sin (see Rom. 2:25-29). Note; however, that the physical act of circumcision and baptism does no removing of sin but rather the act of obedience. Without obedience circumcision and baptism profits one nothing (see Rom. 2:29).
- E. *“And the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house”* (7:9-10).
1. The Sanhedrin council appears to be listening patiently to Stephen. He has not said anything that they disagree with to this point. Stephen reminds the council of the jealousy of the patriarchs in that they moved against Joseph (the beloved son of Jacob) and sold him into Egypt (Gen. 37:28).
 2. Stephen reminds the council how that God was with Joseph each step of his life. Joseph experienced the pains of being betrayed by his own brothers, falsely accused by Potiphar, and thrown in jail. All the while; however, Joseph understood that God had a plan for him.
- F. *“Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent forth our fathers the first time. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's race became manifest unto Pharaoh”* (7:11-13).
1. Stephen reminds the council of the historical famine during the days of the patriarchs that was responsible for ultimately causing them to move to Egypt.
 2. We recall that God had foretold of the famine through the dream of a butler to Pharaoh. Joseph was released from prison due to the abilities to interpret the dreams regarding a famine. The famine came to pass and Egypt was well prepared for it due to Joseph's prophetic knowledge. Joseph was thereby appointed governor of Egypt.
 3. The ten brothers of Joseph's come to Egypt and upon their second visit Joseph reveals himself to them as their brother. Eventually, Joseph introduces his whole family to Pharaoh and they are given to good land of Goshen to live in.

- G. *“And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. And Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, himself and our fathers; and they were carried over unto Shechem, and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a price in silver of the sons of Hamor in Shechem”* (7:14-16).
1. Jacob is summoned to live in Egypt with all 75 family members due to the providentially formed great famine
 2. These great patriarchs died in Egypt and eventually buried in Canaan.
- H. *“But as the time of the promise drew nigh which God vouchsafed unto Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till there arose another king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. The same dealt craftily with our race, and ill-treated our fathers, that they should cast out, their babes to the end they might not live”* (7:17-19).
1. Notice that Stephen keeps the **promise** of God before the Council’s mind. To this day, the Sanhedrin council had lost sight of God’s promises (see study # 48; Loosing Sight of God’s Promises).
 2. The word *“vouchsafed”* (*omnuo*) = “to promise with an oath” (Moulton 287). What had God promised with an oath? The promise Stephen refers to is that which God spoke in Genesis 12:1ff (i.e., God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, that his seed would become a great nation, and that through his seed all nations would be blessed). This covenant was sealed by the act of circumcision. Those who miss this great Bible promise given in the OT and ultimately fulfilled, through Christ, in the NT will miss out on a heavenly eternity.
 3. God had foretold of Israel’s four hundred years in Egyptian bondage and it came to pass. A new Pharaoh of Egypt did not know the good deeds of Joseph and saw the Hebrews as a threat to the sovereignty of the nation (see Ex. 1:8-10). The new Pharaoh attempts to slow the growth of the Hebrews by killing all their male babies and appointing them to the work of slavery.

II. **Stephen’s Defense (7:20-43): Stephen answers the charges regarding blaspheming Moses**

- A. *“At which season Moses was born, and was exceeding fair; and he was nourished three months in his father’s house: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son”* (7:20-21).
1. Amram and Jochebed, Moses’ parents of Levi origin (Ex. 2:1; 6:20), hid Moses for three months due to the edict of Pharaoh to kill all male Hebrews. When the mother could do no more for her three month old son she prepared a small ark and floated Moses in the banks of the Nile River hoping that one would find the boy and raise him.
 2. Amram and Jochebed’s prayers were answered when the daughter of Pharaoh finds Moses and raises him as her own.
- B. *“And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works. But when he was well-nigh forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel”* (7:22-23).
1. Moses’ life can be divided up into three forty year sections. The first forty years were spent being educated in the ways of the Egyptians. Though Moses was raised as Pharaoh’s daughter he nonetheless was taught about God and his true people by his mother.
 2. Through time, Moses developed faith and conviction in the ways of the Lord. He left Egypt, at the age of forty, due to his faith (see Heb. 11:24-27).
- C. *“And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the Egyptian: and he supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not”* (7:24-25).
1. The first contact with his real brethren was a confrontational one. Moses sees a fellow Hebrew being mistreated by an Egyptian and killed him (see Ex. 2:11ff).
 2. Stephen tells the Council that Moses supposed that his brethren would understand that he was God’s deliverer from Egyptian bondage yet the people did not.
 3. Stephen carefully and methodically shows God’s promises and how that many did not understand the unfolding of His promises as it was happening before their eyes. Stephen was preaching a calculated message aimed at waking the Sanhedrin council out of their spiritual slumber. They were being given a chance to overcome their spiritual blindness.

- D. *“And the day following he appeared unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wouldest thou kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?”* (7:26-28).
1. The Hebrews had been in bondage for over four hundred years. They had come to be accustomed to their lot in life. They had forgotten about God’s promises of a land and seed promise of salvation (see study # 48).
 2. The council members were doing the same thing... they were forgetting God’s promises and continuing in the Mosaic system.
 3. The Hebrews paid no attention to Moses and considered him a common murderer. Eventually, they *“thrust him (Moses) away.”* Likewise, the Sanhedrin council paid no attention to Christ and counted him worthy of death as a common criminal. Jesus was despised and rejected (Lk. 9:22).
- E. *“And Moses fled at this saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons”* (7:29).
1. The Genesis account tells us that Moses fled because Pharaoh sought to slay him (see Gen. 2:15).
 2. Moses flees for his life to Midian. Midian is the land east and southeast of the Gulf of Aquaba (one of two main fingers of the Red Sea).
- F. *“And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. And when Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold, there came a voice of the Lord, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. And Moses trembled, and durst not behold. And the Lord said unto him, Loose the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground”* (7:30-33).
1. Moses spends the next forty years of his life in Midian. At the end of the appointed forty years God appears to Moses in a burning bush upon Mount Sinai. Moses was astounded at the sight. God commands Moses to take off his shoes due to the holy nature of the area he now stood.
 2. The Sanhedrin council was comprised of Bible learned men. They were not raised in a cave or under a rock. They were very familiar with this part of Moses’ life.
- G. *“I have surely seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them: and now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? Him hath God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush”* (7:34-35).
1. The Sanhedrin council should have begun to get Stephen’s point. As noted at our notes at Acts 6:15, the mountain of evidence regarding the validity of Christ was too great for any right thinking man to dismiss. The council; however, had rejected and refused to accept Christ. Moses is the type of Christ and Christ the antitype of Moses in that they were both law givers and deliverers of man’s bondage. Moses delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt while Christ delivers man from the bondage of sin (see Jn. 8:32ff).
 2. As Israel lived in bondage to Egypt and rejected Moses even so the council lived in bondage to sin and rejected their deliverer Jesus.
- H. *“This man led them forth, having wrought wonders and signs in Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, who said unto the children of Israel, a prophet shall God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me”* (7:36-37).
1. Stephen reminds the council of the great wonders and signs that were performed in the sight of all Israel for forty years. All believed Moses did these things through the power of God. **Though these mighty wonders were performed the people progressed in disobedience.**
 2. Stephen now brings the council to his main point. This Moses, that all believe in and have great respect for, had prophesied of the coming of Jesus Christ by saying, *“A prophet shall God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me”* (see Deut. 18:15). The council, no doubt, understood Moses’ prophecy to refer to the coming Messiah. This very message had already been preached to the council members as well as all Jerusalem by the apostles (see Acts 3:22-26). Jesus would be like Moses in that he would deliver man from their bondage of sin. Jesus was the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham.

- I. *“This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us:”* (7:38).
 1. To Stephen Moses was real, Jesus was real, and God’s laws were real and intended for man to follow. Stephen reminds the council that Moses received the *“living oracles”* from God while upon Mount Sinai. This Moses spoke to God in the Mount Sinai!
 2. The *“church in the wilderness”* was the assembly of God’s people that had been delivered out of Egyptian bondage and had now come to Mount Sinai to receive the law of God.
- J. *“to whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods that shall go before us: for as for this Moses, who led us forth out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands”* (7:39-41).
 1. The record of this event occurs at Exodus 32 all. Stephen traces through the base mind of the people. Israel had witnessed the mighty works of God through Moses yet quickly pushed these events to the back of their mind and did the unheard of. Israel constructed a calf idol and called it God. Upon completion of the idol Stephen states that they, *“Rejoiced in the works of their hands.”*
 2. What foolishness. What utter abandonment of reason. What reckless actions! With all God’s power and promises before them they quickly loose sight and fall into deep sin.
 3. Again, Stephen is careful to note that Israel, *“thrust him (Moses) from them”* just as the Jews were thrusting Christ and his apostles away at this very moment of history.
- K. *“But God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, Did ye offer unto me slain beasts and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan, the figures which ye made to worship them: And I will carry you away beyond Babylon”* (7:42-43).
 1. The idea of God *“giving them up to serve...”* indicates the idea of God allowing man to perform the true desires of his heart. Man will do what he wants to do and so God has ordained and created us this way. Those who want to serve God in sincerity and truth will do so because this is their desire. Likewise, the man or woman who desires unlawful living will do as they please. The apostle Paul establishes this principle of human choice at Romans 1:24ff.
 2. Stephen quotes from Amos 5:25-27. Amos had convicted God’s people of sin in that they had exercised disrespect for God’s prophets (Amos 2:11-12), had no knowledge of God and His laws (Amos 3:10), practiced idolatry (Amos 3:14), and unlawful worship the Lord (Amos 4:4-5; 5:21ff; 8:4-6). Apparently during the forty years that Israel wandered in the wilderness, for an evil report of the land of Canaan, they worshipped God by mingling idolatry with His prescribed worship. Israel had clearly continued this melting pot religion even until the days of Amos. Stephen exposes the Israelite’s forefather’s sins of idolatry. These forefathers had worshiped *“Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan.”* While the council may have deceived themselves into believing the holiness of their forefathers Stephen exposes their continued wickedness.
 - a. Moloch = *“All OT references allude to an individual deity identified in specific instances with the Ammonite god Molech for whom Solomon built a shrine in Jerusalem (see I Kings 11:7)”* (I SBE v. 3, pp. 401. Molech was generally worshiped by sacrificing live children in fire (see II Chr. 28:3).
 - b. Rephan = *“The Babylonian name for the god of the planet Saturn”* (ISBE v. 4, pp. 138).
 3. Stephen has revealed God’s promises, showed how that God cared for Israel, and how that Israel rejected God’s gifts and worshiped idols rather than their creator.
 4. Many like to foolishly look only at the pleasantries of life and heritage. Stephen was giving the Jews a wake up call. Their fathers that had gone on before them had been guilty of gross lawlessness. Stephen is challenging the council not to fall into the same sins as their fathers (see study # 49; Take an Honest Look at yourself).

III. Stephen’s Defense (7:44-50): Stephen answers the charges regarding blaspheming the Temple

- A. *“Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen”* (7:44).
 1. Consider the fact that up to this point Stephen had exposed Israel’s obstinate behavior to the Lord though He had made great promises to them through Abraham, brought them out of Egyptian

bondage with a mighty hand, and delivered the law to them. Israel's forefathers had rejected God's promises by their idolatry, rejected Moses, and rejected God's laws throughout their history. Stephen now moves to the topic of the tabernacle in the wilderness (the council had charged him with speaking evil against it).

2. God ordained Moses to construct the tabernacle "*according to the figure that he had seen.*" The author of Hebrews wrote of Moses' vision on Mount Sinai regarding the temple saying that God warned him, on that occasion, to "*make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount*" (Heb. 8:5). Moses was to follow God's pattern exactly (and so he did).

B. "*Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations, that God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;*" (7:45)

1. The fathers of the Israelites brought the tabernacle of God with them into Canaan when they went in to possess the land.
2. As the council's forefathers came into Canaan God thrust out all the Canaanites by miraculous means (Jericho, the sun standing still, Gideon's war against the Midianites, David and Goliath, etc.).
3. Note very carefully Stephen's words: "*God thrust out before the face of our fathers.*" Stephen was proving that these fathers of old ignored the mighty God's wonders and signs. The Jews, during the days of Stephen, had done the same thing. They witnessed Christ's mighty signs (Acts 2:22), witnessed the miraculous tongue speaking on Pentecost (Acts 2:12-13), and witnessed the miraculous healing of a forty year old lame man (Acts 3:1ff; 4:16). The evidence was overwhelming yet the council rejected Christ. They were truly no different than their forefathers that had gone on before them (see study # 47).

C. "*who found favor in the sight of God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwells not in houses made with hands; as saith the prophet, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth the footstool of my feet: What manner of house will ye build me? Saith the Lord: Or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?"*" (7:46-50).

1. David truly loved God and thereby found favor in God's eyes. David considered God and asked to build him a permanent house rather than the tent of the tabernacle; however, God refused to allow David to do such a thing (II Sam. 7:1ff). Latter; however, Solomon would build the Lord a house.
2. Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah at 66:1-2 to illustrate that God desires not physical house to dwell in but rather He desires men's hearts (see Isa. 66:3).
3. The point: God has created all things. To reject God is to reject all things of creation.

IV. Stephen's Defense (7:51-53): Stephen answers the charges regarding blaspheming the Law of Moses

A. "*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not*" (7:51-53).

1. Stephen goes down in history as one of the most convicted and bold men of faith (likened unto Moses, Phinehas, Peter, Paul, James and John etc.) (see study # 50; Conviction). Stephen's sermon has connected the dots from the promises of God, to the ill treatment of God's people, to the rejection of Joseph and Moses by their forefathers, to the current men who represent the Sanhedrin council. The council stands just as guilty as their fathers before them in that they have crucified the Christ and refused to follow God's commandments.
2. Peter had earlier turned the tables upon the Sanhedrin council and actually put them on trial (see Acts 5:30-32). Stephen is now doing the same thing to these same men. Stephen accuses the council of:
 - a. Being "*stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears.*" To be "*stiffnecked*" (*sklerotrachelos*) = "Stiff-necked, obstinate, **refractory** (to deflect, not responsive to treatment) (Moulton 369). To be uncircumcised in heart and ears would be to not have sin cut away from one's life. Stephen, like a boxer, had been throwing jabs at their pride stricken

hearts and now delivers the knockout blow. This statement has exposed their refractory state of mind.

- b. Resisting the Holy Spirit as did their fathers before them. To “*resist*” (*antiptpto*) = “to fall upon, rush upon any one; hence, to resist by force, oppose, strive against” (Moulton 33). The charge is that the council is opposing and striving against the Holy Spirit.
 - c. As their forefathers had persecuted and murdered all the prophets even so these council members were guilty of killing Jesus the Christ.
 - d. The council was guilty of not keeping the Mosaic Law.
3. With a few sweeping statements the council is condemned as unlawful murderers. To be called uncircumcised in heart and ears, murderers, and lawless men was more than their pride filled hearts could stand. Their aggravation grows to aggression and their aggression grows to murder.

V. The Sanhedrin Council Responds to Stephen’s Charges (7:54-60):

- A. *“Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”* (7:54-56).
1. When the council heard the fourfold charge of Stephen they were “*cut to the heart*” (*dieprionto tais kardiais*) “to saw asunder or in twain, to divide by a saw; to be sawn through mentally; i.e. to be rent with vexation” (Thayer 141)... “Fig. be cut to the quick, be **infuriated**” (AG 187). The charges levied against them infuriated their pride stricken hearts.
 2. Stephen sees Jesus and refers to him as the “*Son of man*” (vs. 56). Daniel had referred to the coming Jesus as the “*Son of man*” (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus confirms his Messiah-ship by confessing that he is the “*Son of man*” (Matt. 8:20 etc.). The Sanhedrin was offended at the words of Stephen. They did not believe Jesus was the Christ and to have Stephen now proclaim that he sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God was, in their mind, the highest form of blasphemy.
 3. Their infuriation led to the council’s “*gnashing*” upon Stephen with their teeth. To “*gnash*” (*brucho*) = “to grind, gnash, with the teeth, to bite, chew” (Thayer 106). “Gnash, **a sign of violent rage**” (AG 148). “To tear in pieces, devour” (LS 157). “To grate or gnash the teeth” (Moulton 74). It appears that what took place was a violent fit of rage (AG) expressed in their grinding and gnashing their teeth together in anger as they apprehended Stephen. Nestle and Marshall’s Greek text state that the council “gnashed the teeth **at** him” (NM 495). Stephen’s accusations cut through their prideful heart and instead of repenting they killed him.
 4. As the Council, in a fit of rage, apprehend Stephen to kill him a vision is seen. Stephen sees the glories of heaven with Jesus sitting at the right hand of God.
- B. *“But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul”* (7:57-58).
1. The council wanted nothing to do with Stephen’s heavenly vision. They were punch drunk from the jabs and refractory state of mind. Their hard hearts had become calcified. They voluntarily stopped their ears from hearing his words as though they made them sick. Luke draws a vivid picture of the horrid ordeal within the minds of his readers. The council apprehends Stephen, drags him out of the city, and stones him to death.
 2. A young man named “*Saul*” was watching the whole affair as the murderers laid their coats at his feet that they may possibly guard them while they did their devilish deed. This Saul will come to be the apostle Paul and one of the most convicted NT characters that we read of (see study # 51; The Apostle Paul).
- C. *“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep”* (7:59-60).
1. Under Roman rule, the Jews were not permitted to put a man to death (Jn. 18:31). One of two possibilities exists. First, it may be that the Jews were so worked up that they ignored the laws of the Romans and murdered Stephen. Secondly, Boles states, “It is probable that the events took place in A.D. 37; this was the year in which Tiberius died and Caligula succeeded him. There was

a time when there was no Roman governor in Judea, and the Jewish factions reigned supreme. Hence, the opponents of Christianity visited Christian homes and thrust Christian men and women into vile prisons, and then brought them before the elders in the synagogue, who tried to force them to deny Jesus; on their refusal some of them were put to death (Acts 22:4; 26:10), others were beaten (Acts 26:11), and all suffered many outrages (I Tim. 1:13).²

2. The Mosaic Law required the witnesses of a crime which leads to death be the first to cast a stone at the guilty party (Deut. 17:7; Jn. 8:7). The witnesses here mentioned are obviously the false witnesses of Acts 6:13.
3. As the members of the council stone Stephen, he prays to God saying two things: “*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*” (vs. 59b). “*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*” (vs. 60). We recall that the loving Jesus had said the same thing while upon the cross (see Lk. 23:34). While Stephen’s sermon had an aggressive and abrasive ending it was nonetheless done out of love. Those whose hearts are hardened in sin must be awakened. The risk Stephen took to awaken their hardened hearts was his life. Here was a man who truly loved. While others may think such “approaches” to solve problems among brethren is unloving let us turn to examples such as this and learn that the only way to get through to sinful men’s hearts is to clearly state their sin. They will either get mad or humble themselves before God. Either reaction may occur yet the faithful has the responsibility to expose sin (Eph. 5:11). Christians should never allow the ungodly to use the tactics of “that was not loving... you could have handled that differently... you did not consider their feelings...” to thwart their God ordained duty. Souls are at stake.

Chapter 8

I. The Early Church is Persecuted (8:1-4):

- A. “*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles*” (8:1).
 1. Saul is once again mentioned (see Acts 7:58). He is said to have “*consented*” (*suneudokeo*) unto the death of Stephen. The Greek word *suneudokeo* = “to approve with another... to stamp approval... agreeable” (Moulton 389). Saul approved and agreed with the stoning of Stephen. Saul will come to shamefully regret these days of his life (see Acts 26:9; I Cor. 15:9; etc.) (See study # 51).
 2. The very day of Stephen’s death marked the beginning of a widespread persecution against those who would profess their faith in Jesus Christ. A witch hunt took place for those who professed faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 8 marks the beginnings of the great dispersion of Christians throughout the world.
 3. Christians, except for the Apostles of Jesus Christ, were on the run as they moved from city to city. The Sanhedrin council had made a decree that no man speak by the authority of Jesus Christ and so they were now enforcing the law (see Acts 4:17; 5:28).
- B. “*And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison*” (8:2-3).
 1. Devout men of faith took the body of Stephen and buried him with heavy lamentation.
 2. Saul was a man of Tarsus (Acts 22:3). Saul had an impressive Jewish heritage and superior education as a Pharisee which he learned at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:5). Saul was convinced that this Jesus was an ordinary man and all those who professed faith in him were guilty of blasphemy against the Mosaic Law and God. He was doing what he thought was the lawful thing to do (see Acts 26:9) (see study # 51).
 3. Paul, through a spirit of conviction, sought out Christians and drug them to his perceived justice by the authority of the chief priests (see Acts 26:10). According to Acts 26:10 Stephen was not the only one who was put to death for their faith.

² Boles, H. L. New Testament Commentaries based on the American Standard Version, Acts pg. 123

- C. *“They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word”* (8:4).
1. The Sanhedrin council actually helped the spread of the gospel by persecuting the saints of God.
 2. Everywhere the saints went they preached the gospel even though they faced the penalty of death (see study # 30).

II. Philip Preaches the Gospel in Samaria and to Simon the Sorcerer (8:5-13):

- A. *“And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ”* (8:5).
1. Philip was one of the seven chosen at Acts 6:5 to serve tables. Philip is known as the *“evangelist”* at Acts 21:8. Seeing that all Christians, save the Apostles, had vacated Jerusalem there were now no tables to serve. Philip goes about preaching.
 2. Philip leaves Jerusalem and travels north to Samaria (a city about 22 miles North of Jerusalem). The region of Samaria was located within Palestine between Galilee (N) and Judah / Judea (S) and between the Jordan River (E) and the Sharon Plain (W) (Mediterranean Sea).
 3. We learn much about the Samaritans from Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman recorded at John 4:5-42. Animosity existed between the Jews and Samaritans going all the way back to II Kings 17. Assyria had conquered Israel and exiled them to other lands while bringing in other conquered peoples from other lands. The exiled peoples of other nations intermarried with the remaining Jews and formed the Samaritans. Later, after the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, Zerubbabel told the Samaritans, who wanted to help rebuild the city and its temple, that they had no part in this. The Samaritans were greatly offended and were enemies of the Jews ever since. The Samaritans held to their position of worship only being acceptable at Mt. Gerizim and the Jews contended that Jerusalem was the holy place of worship.
 4. The Importance of this text is that God’s blessings through Abraham (i.e., Christ and the forgiveness of sins) was to indeed be for all nations (see Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:16, 15). Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans (see study # 30).
- B. *“and the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did”* (8:6).
1. Multitudes of Samaritans *“gave heed”* (*prosecho*) = “to apply the mind to a thing, to give heed to, attend to, observe, consider” (Moulton 349). With one accord the Samaritans listened, considered, and obeyed the words of Philip. Philip had *“preached Christ”* which means he taught every thing that the apostles taught the Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-38), Sanhedrin Council (Acts 4:5ff; 5:30ff; 7:1ff), and the people of Jerusalem (Acts 4:1-4; 5:12-14; 6:1, 7) (see study # 53; Preaching Christ and # 30).
 2. Note that once again signs accompanied the preaching (see Acts 2:22; 3:1ff; 5:12-14; 6:8). Mark tells us that the signs were the means by which the gospel message was confirmed as the inspired word of God (see Mk. 16:20) (see study # 21).
- C. *“For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city”* (8:7-8).
1. The city of Samaria was occupied by demon possessed people, palsied, and lame. All were healed of their maladies and the result was that the city was filled with joy.
 2. There were three classes of people that needed *“healing”*:
 - a. First, there were those with palsy. To have *“palsy”* (*paraluo*) was to have “paralyzed body limbs” (Moulton 305)... “Designates various conditions characterized by a loss of ability to move or to control movements of the body. It generally results from damage to the brain or spinal cord or from a disease of the central nervous system” (ISBE, v. 3, pp. 649).
 - b. Secondly, there were the *“lame.”* We studied about Peter and John healing a lame man from birth at Acts 3:1ff. This man was lame in that his feet and ankle bones had no strength to support his body. The word *“lame”* (*cholos*) = “crippled in the feet, limping, halting” (Moulton 440).
 - c. Thirdly, many had been possessed with *“unclean spirits”* (two Greek words - *akathartos pneuma*) = “impure, unclean; lewd; foul” (Moulton 11) / spirits – “spiritual being (see Jn. 4:24)... a bodiless spirit (see Lk. 24:37)... a foul spirit (Matt. 8:16)” (Moulton 331) (for further study of unclean spirits and demon possession see Appendix at the end of this study).

- D. *“But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great. And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries”* (8:9-11).
1. Simon was the Siegfried and Roy show of his time. A masterful magician with the skills to captivate his audience in awe. Simon had amazed the citizens of Samaria with his sorcery. The people truly believed that Simon was the instrument of God whereby His great powers were being displayed.
 2. While the Samaritans looked upon Simon as one who exercised the power of God Luke tells us that Simon’s works were that of “*sorceries*” (*mageia*) = “to use magical arts, practice magic, sorcery” (Moulton 255). By the slight of hand and trickery Simon had deceived the masses of Samaria.
 3. Such magical activity captivated the minds and faith of the Samaritans. Many today are captivated similarly by a man’s oratorical skills and converted to the man’s magical speaking rather than the truth.
- E. *“But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed”* (8:12-13).
1. Simon went from being the one who amazed people with magic to being amazed himself at Philip’s ability to work miracles by the power of God. Philip’s miraculous works included healing the palsied, lame, and demon possessed. While Simon was able to perform magic tricks he could in no way do what Philip did by the power of God.
 2. Due to the obvious power of God being displayed by Philip, the Samaritans along with Simon, gave heed to the gospel message preached and were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.
 3. Note that baptism occurred as a result of the miracles and preaching. The studious student of God’s word will note that the gospel message of Christ has been preached on several occasions to this point in our study. All hearers of the gospel have been from Jerusalem. We must conclude that when the gospel was preached the terms of receiving the forgiveness of sins was always preached (see Acts 2:38). A uniform message was preached to all. That message was Christ and the forgiveness of man’s sins. Man is justified by the saving blood of Jesus when baptized (see study # 16; # 30; and # 53).

III. **The Apostles travel to Samaria to distribute the Holy Spirit (8:14-25):**

- A. *“Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus”* (8:14-16).
1. Word of the Samaritans obeying the gospel reaches the apostles in Jerusalem (they had remained in the city [see Acts 8:1]). At this point the Samaritans had heard the gospel, believed, and were baptized for the remission of their sins. They had not as of yet “*received the Holy Spirit.*” Note that “*receiving the word of God*” is not equated to “*receiving the Holy Spirit.*” This verse demands a deeper studying into the subject of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Let us note what we have learned in this study regarding the Holy Spirit:
 - a. The Holy Spirit is identified as deity (i.e., God) (Acts 5:3-4).
 - b. The Holy Spirit’s name is so closely related to the word of God they are sometimes interspersed for one another (see Rom. 5:5 / see also the name of Christ used in the same way at Col. 1:25-27). God thereby “*gives*” the Holy Spirit (the gospel) to those who hear and obey (Acts 5:32), ask (Lk. 11:13), and seek after it (Lk. 11:10). Luke has apparently used the phrase “*receive the Holy Spirit*” differently than he did at Acts 5:32 (i.e., the HS is given to those who obey). The word “*given*” the Holy Spirit at Acts 5:32 is a Greek verb in the aorist tense. The aorist denotes past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action. We would say then that when one obeys the gospel he or she is given the Holy Spirit; i.e., the truth (see notes at Acts 5:32). Said individual has heard the truth (past action) and acted upon it.

- c. The work of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify man (Jn. 16:8ff).
 - d. Those guided by the Word of God are said to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4, 9, 14; Gal. 3:1-2; 5:15-18).
 - e. Baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred to the apostles on the day of Pentecost and empowered them to perform miracles (Mk. 16:20; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1ff).
 - f. The gift of the Holy Spirit is equated to the sanctification, forgiveness, and justification of man (Acts 2:38).
3. We find that the Samaritans had heard and obeyed the gospel message and thereby had received the Holy Spirit (as those of Acts 5:32). Secondly we find that the Samaritans had been baptized into Christ and thereby had received the gift for the Holy Spirit i.e., the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Luke now tells us that even though the Samaritans had been “*given the Holy Spirit*” (i.e., truth) and had received the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” (i.e., forgiveness through the act of baptism) they had not yet “*received the Holy Spirit.*” Receiving the Holy Spirit and being baptized into the name of the Lord were obviously two different events.
4. Luke identifies what “*receiving the Holy Spirit*” is in the context of this chapter; i.e., a distribution of power much like the apostles received on Pentecost (i.e., a baptism of the Holy Spirit) (see also Acts 19:1-6) (see Appendix on the Holy Spirit at the end of this study).
- B. “*Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit*” (8:17-19).
- 1. Let us note that Philip apparently did not have the power to distribute the Holy Spirit else Peter and John would not have had to be sent from Jerusalem to Samaria to do this. Secondly, if indeed it is the case that the apostles alone had the God ordained ability to impart the Holy Spirit then these powers would certainly cease after they had died (the very thing that Paul said would eventually occur [see I Cor. 13:1ff]).
 - 2. The Samaritans “*received the Holy Spirit*” (i.e., the power to perform miraculous works) only when the apostles “*laid their hands on them.*” A similar incident is recorded at Acts 19:1ff.
 - 3. The wicked dross of Simon’s heart is exposed when he sees such power being transferred and desires to do the same. Simon’s previous thorn in the soul was his desire to have fame and fortune (see Acts 8:9).
- C. “*But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right before God*” (8:20-21).
- 1. The very words of Simon, regarding buying the gift of God with silver, was offensive to the apostle Peter. The thinking heart of Simon was “*not right before God.*” While sinful words and deeds ought to be cause for shame in a man’s life it is also the cause for righteous indignation in those who witness the sin (see study # 55; Righteous Indignation).
 - 2. Here we see that man’s thoughts can condemn him as well as our actual words and actions. Simon’s “*thought*” was sinful and thereby his heart was “*not right before God.*” No where did God reveal, through the Holy Spirit, that man could obtain the power of laying hands upon others to distribute the power of the Holy Spirit. This being the case it would certainly be sinful for Simon to desire this gift. A lesson on the silence of the scriptures is here learned. God gave the power of Holy Spirit distribution to the apostles and did not say anything about others doing this. When Simon attempted to usurp the authorized power of the apostles he sinned (see study # 52; Silence of the Scriptures). We also see the identity of the Bible heart. Note that Simon’s heart is equivalent to his thoughts (see study # 56; The Bible Heart).
 - 3. Lastly, note that Peter refers to the distribution of Holy Spirit power through the laying on of the apostle’s hands is identified with “*the gift of God.*” This **gift** cannot be confused with the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” at Acts 2:38 because those who receive that gift did so through the act of baptism. The Samaritans had already been baptized; however, they had not received the Holy Spirit’s gifts. If the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is the miraculous powers of God then all Christians would have had to receive this as per Acts 2:38. I Corinthians 12 hints as to all Christians having various abilities

yet a geographical study of the expanding borders of the kingdom of God would militate against such a notion. The twelve apostles would have had to spend all their time traveling to every established local churches throughout the world to impart these gifts. This is not the idea that we read of in the NT and was certainly beyond the scope of the apostles' work and God ordained objective. Please refer back to technical notes at Acts 2:38 regarding the "*gift of the Holy Spirit*" as well as the appendix study over the Holy Spirit.

- D. *"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity"* (8:22-23).
1. Simon's desire to have the power designated for the apostles alone is identified as "*wickedness*." His wicked thoughts that proceeded from his mouth had identified him as defiled (see Matt. 15:17-20). We have here the formula for forgiveness after one has been baptized. Many tell us that we teach baptismal salvation and that such theology demands one be baptized over and over as they sin. Peter tells Simon what to do to be forgiven of his sinful thought after he was baptized. Simon is told to "*repent*" and "*pray*" to God for forgiveness. The apostle John said virtually the same thing at I John 1:9. Christians today that find themselves in sin are commanded to repent (turn away from the wickedness) **and** pray to God for forgiveness. Many teach repentance only yet God said repent **and** pray for forgiveness!
 2. Simon's problem was that he was "*in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity*." The word "*gall*" (*chole*) = "bitterness" (LS 891 and Moulton 437). The Greek for "*bitterness*" (*pikria*) = "bitterness" (LS 639; Moulton 324). The NKJB translates the verse "the poison of bitterness..." It seems that the thought is that Simon's mind was poisoned by bitterness and thereby enslaved to the sin of covetousness. The phrase is picturesque in that it vividly illustrates a man's heart poisoned by an unlawful desire.
- E. *"And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me"* (8:24).
1. Something Peter said struck fear in Simon's heart. Luke tells us that Peter has identified sin in the life of Simon. Peter exposes the defiled heart of Simon. Peter instructs Simon to repent (turn from your unlawful lust for this power) and pray to God for forgiveness. The verse before us necessarily infers that when Peter preached Jesus the subject matter included the eternal damning consequences of sin (see Matt. 5:22; 10:28; 18:9) (see study # 53). Simon was terrified once he came to himself and understood the consequences of his actions.
 2. Simon's response is the result of a humble acceptance of God's word exposing sin. Jesus said that this was the work of the Holy Spirit (see Jn. 16:7-10). How do you and I respond when someone exposes our sin? Is our response as Simon or do we get angry? (see study # 54; How do I Respond when my sin is Pointed up to Me?)
- F. *"They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans"* (8:25).
1. The "*word of the Lord*" is the revelation given to the apostles by the comforter that Jesus said would be given to them (see Jn. 16).
 2. Once the apostles laid hands upon the new converts of Samaria they went about other cities in Samaria preaching the gospel.
 3. Notice the equivalences. The "word of the Lord" equals "preaching the gospel." Both these statements equate to "preaching Jesus" (Acts 8:4-5) (see study # 57; The Nature of Truth).

IV. Philip preaches to the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-39):

- A. *"But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert"* (8:26).
1. Angels no longer speak to man today due to God's revelation being completed and perfect (see I Cor. 13:1ff). Philip has dealt with demonic angels in Samaria yet now communicates with a faithful angel of the Lord. The angel instructs Philip to travel to Gaza by way of a deserted rout.
 2. Gaza was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines (see map at the end of this study [Philip's Travels]).

- B. *“And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah”* (8:27-28).
1. The deserted road that Philip took from Samaria to Gaza would have likely taken Philip east of Jerusalem and further south toward Gaza. Somewhere between Gaza and Jerusalem Philip runs into the Ethiopian Eunuch. The Eunuch was returning to Ethiopia after worshipping in Jerusalem.
 2. Ethiopia was located in Africa due south of Egypt; i.e., “the countries of the upper Nile S of Egypt” (ISBE, v. 2, pp. 193). The eunuch was the countries’ treasurer in power over all the queens’ funds. The title of *“Candace, queen of the Ethiopians”* was a common name given to all the queens who ruled in Ethiopia. Just as the Pharaoh’s ruled Egypt and the Caesar’s ruled Rome, even so the Candace’s ruled Ethiopia.
 3. The book of Acts demands that I put away all prejudices and preconceived ideas about the diversity of humanity. We have seen Jews, Samaritans, and now an Ethiopian obey the gospel. Out of all walks of life there are those whose hearts are receptive to the truth (see study # 11, # 15, and # 30).
- C. *“And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot”* (8:29).
1. The *“Spirit”* is likely the Holy Spirit. There is much divine intervention to have the gospel preached to this eunuch. Philip is commanded to *“join thyself to this chariot.”* Within the chariot is the Ethiopian reading the book of Isaiah.
 2. This is the first one on one Bible study that is recorded in Acts. Our other conversion examples have been groups of people such as the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2, 4, 5, 6), the Sanhedrin council (Acts 4:1-4; 5:12-14; 6:1, 7), and the Samaritans (Acts 8).
- D. *“And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him”* (8:30-31).
1. As Philip approaches the chariot he overhears the Ethiopian eunuch reading from the book of Isaiah. Apparently the eunuch was reading aloud. Philip introduces himself to the eunuch by asking him if he understood what Isaiah’s prophetic words meant.
 2. The eunuch has already been identified as a worshiper of God and now we see that he was a student of God’s word. He displays a mind to learn by telling Philip that he cannot understand the prophecy unless someone *“guide”* him. To *“guide”* (*hodegeo*) = “to show or lead the way” (LS 543). The eunuch was not too proud to say that he did not understand the scripture he was reading. He asks (besought) Philip to come up and explain the matter to him. It may be that the eunuch received an Isaiah scroll while in Jerusalem or maybe he obtained it from the Alexandrian Library in Egypt. Whatever the case this man illustrates the type of spirit that Jesus called for at John 6:44-45.
- E. *“Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: his generation who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth”* (8:32-33).
1. The passage from Isaiah that the eunuch was reading is found in Isaiah 53:7-8.
 2. Isaiah prophecies of a day when the Christ would be crucified by cruel and unjust means. The purpose of this ill treatment and death was so that *“the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world”* (Jn. 1:29).
- F. *“And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus”* (8:34-35).
1. Before going any further in this chapter we already know what Philip’s preaching involved. Philip preached Jesus! Preaching Jesus is exactly what he did to those of Samaria (see Acts 8:4-5). Preaching Jesus is exactly what Peter did on Pentecost (Acts 2). Preaching Jesus is exactly what the Jews in Jerusalem were taught (Acts 2-6). Preaching of Jesus involved teaching about the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of Christ. Preaching Jesus involved telling people of the saving blood of Jesus. Preaching Jesus meant that people were told about the

- kingdom of God (i.e., the church) (see Acts 8:12). Preaching Jesus involved commanding men to be baptized so that they may contact the saving blood of Jesus (see Acts 2:38; 8:12, 13). Preaching Jesus involved warning mankind of the eternal consequences of not being forgiven of sins (see Acts 2:40; 8:24).
2. Isaiah was giving prophecy about the Christ and Philip took this opportunity and preached to the eunuch.
- G. *“And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”* (8:36).
1. Without even looking further at verse 36 we knew that preaching Jesus involved baptism because in all previous cases of conversion it had been taught. Why would a different message be taught now? Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch and though it is not stated, this preaching involved the instructions of baptism. If this is not the case then why would the eunuch ask to be baptized?
 2. The only thing that could possibly hinder the eunuch’s baptism was his own lack of faith and the unwillingness to confess with his mouth that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the very one that Isaiah the prophet spoke of.
- H. *“And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him”* (8:36-38).
1. Verse 37 is not in the most reliable Greek manuscripts; however, it certainly fits. Philip’s answer to the eunuch was that if he truly believed that Jesus was the Christ there was certainly nothing that could hinder his baptism. Even if the confession of the eunuch is not in the original manuscript the inference clearly suggest that he did make such a confession.
 2. Philip commands the chariot to stop at the water. Philip and the eunuch go down to the water. Philip baptized the eunuch in the water (submerges him) so that his sins would be forgiven (Acts 2:38) and that he may be saved from this crooked generation (Acts 2:40). The word *“baptized”* (*baptizo*) = “To dip, immerse; to cleanse or purify by washing” (Moulton 65)... “to dip in or under water; metaph. over head and ears in debt” (LS 146)... “dip, immerse, plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm” (AG 131)... “to immerge, submerge, cleanse by dipping or submerging” (Thayer 94). Not only is the word *“baptize”* defined as a complete submersion but the fact that Philip and the eunuch went down to the water and came up out of the water suggest this as well. Jesus’ baptism was in the same manner (see Mk. 1:9-10) and thereby when people were baptized there a need of *“much water”* (Jn. 3:23) (see study # 16).
- I. *“And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing”* (8:39).
1. Why did the eunuch go on his way *“rejoicing”* after he was baptized? Why were the Samaritans filled with much joy after giving heed to Philip’s words (Acts 8:8)? Why did the Jews on Pentecost *“praise God”* after being baptized (Acts 2:46)? These newly converted people were joyous and praised God because they were now forgiven of their sins and saved from the damnable eternity of hell. They had real hope now.
 2. As the Spirit had instructed Philip to approach the eunuch and preach Christ even so the same Spirit now instructs Philip to go in another direction.
- J. *“But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea”* (8:40).
1. We have now read of Philip *“preaching the word”* and *“proclaiming the Christ”* to the Samaritans (Acts 8:4-5). Philip has *“preached Jesus”* to the eunuch of Ethiopia (Acts 8:35). Luke now tells us that Philip *“preached the gospel”* as he traveled north of Gaza up to Caesarea (the entire coastal region that formerly belonged to the Philistines) (see map of Philip’s travels at the end of this study).
 2. When one *“preaches the gospel”* one is telling people of Jesus (i.e., his life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven). Preaching the gospel means telling people that they need to be saved from the consequences of sin. Preaching Jesus means telling people that they need to believe, confess that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God, repent of their sins committed, and be baptized for the forgiveness of those sins. Preaching Jesus involves telling people about the

kingdom of God, the church. Those who obey the gospel are added to the church (Acts 2:41; 5:14). As we continue through this study no one can question whether or not preaching the gospel involved the command to be baptized! (see study # 15 and # 53). Every time we now read of Jesus being preached we know exactly what is being said.

Chapter 9

I. The Conversion of Saul (9:1-19):

- A. *“But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem”* (9:1-2).
1. We were first introduced to Saul at Acts 7:58. Saul was the keeper of the mob’s garments while they stoned Stephen to death. Acts 8:1 tells us that he was *“consenting unto his death.”*
 2. Acts 7 and 8 are not the last we hear of Saul. Luke will later reveal that Saul was a man of Tarsus (Acts 22:3). Saul had an impressive Jewish heritage and superior education as a Pharisee which he learned at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:5). Being a champion of the Mosaic Law invigorated this man to *“lay waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison”* (Acts 8:3).
 3. Saul was not satisfied with his laying waste the church in Jerusalem only. Once the Christians were dispersed from Jerusalem other churches began to pop up. Saul was determined to squash this new movement which to some was referred to as *“the Way.”* His desire was to track down Christians in other regions of the country. Apparently word of Christianity’s spreading church came back to Jerusalem from places like Damascus. Saul, being the zealous man that he was, went to the high priest that he may obtain written authority to travel to Damascus and capture anyone who would claim to be of the *“Way”* (see map at the end of this study titled, “Saul of Tarsus”) (see study # 51). Like the prophets of old who stood in the face of those who opposed the Mosaic Law even so Saul clearly believed that he was championing God’s cause by persecuting the Christians.
- B. *“And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do”* (9:3-6).
1. Saul succeeded in obtaining permission by the high priest to travel to Damascus that he may bring back Christians bound for judgment. Here is a man on a mission. Here is a man whose every waking moment is filled with purpose and that purpose is to persecute the church. The idea of *“breathing (empneo) threats (apeile)”* (Acts 9:1) indicates, “to be animated with the spirit of threats” (Moulton 136, 37).
 2. Saul may be viewed as a powerful train motoring down a track with excessive speed and apparently unstoppable in its mission. Jesus; however, derails this train with a vision of *“light out of heaven”* and the statement, *“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”* The fact that Saul fell to the earth indicates that he immediately recognized the event as divine. At Acts 26:14 Luke records Paul’s account of this moment and it is said additionally that Jesus tells Saul, *“It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.”* Jesus was telling Saul that he was fighting an impossible battle. No matter who or how much persecution occurred against the Christians they were going to keep growing. Like the persecuted Hebrews during the days of Pharaoh. The word of God tells us that *“the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel...”* (Ex. 1:12).
 3. Notice that Saul refers to Jesus’ voice as, *“Lord.”* Jesus reveals himself to Saul and tells him to continue on his travels to Damascus, *“and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”* Saul’s mission in life was to for ever change on this day.
- C. *“And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the*

hand, and brought him into Damascus And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink” (9:7-9).

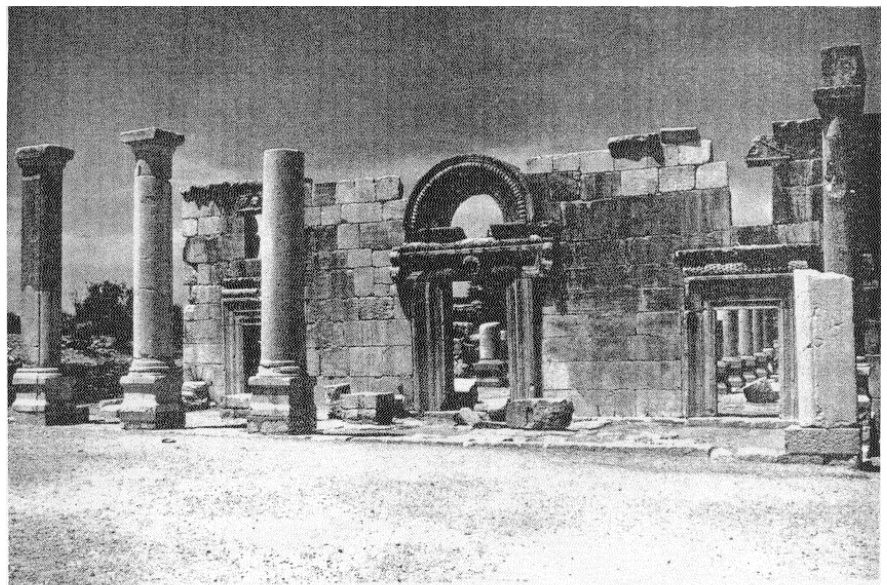
1. The men that accompanied Saul from Jerusalem to Damascus witness the same event. They hear the voice of Jesus yet see no man. They too fall to the earth in fear (see Acts 26:14). They are speechless and apparently terrified by the event. The outcome of these men’s faith is not revealed in the Word of God.
 2. A man so driven with the purpose to stamp out, by means of persecution, a manner of faith and way of life has just been stopped in his tracks. All that Saul thought was worthy of a Godly man to be involved in was now revealed as wrong. The intense and animated direction of life has not only been challenged but found to be wrong. Saul’s inner spirit must have been crushed. He is now blind due to the divine incident. Perplexed, pained, deflated, and humbled Saul sits in the house of Judas in Damascus and does not eat or drink for three days. This man of great faith has just found out that his persecution had actually been directed at the Lord he so loved. The guilt was overwhelming as we find Paul admitting latter in his life.
- D. *“Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prays; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight” (9:10-12).*
1. Acts 22:12 states that Ananias was, *“A devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there.”* Ananias was thereby a baptized Christian of the *“Way.”* The Lord appears to Ananias in a vision and commands him to go to Saul and lay his hands upon him that his sight might be restored.
 2. Additionally we find that Saul was praying during his first three days in Damascus. I suspect his prayers were cried out in tears while begging for mercy from the Lord. Saul was doing what any other wicked man would be doing if his life was incontestably exposed as sinful and wrong.
- E. *“But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name” (9:13-14).*
1. Word of Saul’s ruthless work in Jerusalem and intended work in Damascus had reached the ears of the saints in that city. Ananias does not understand why the Lord would desire such a man. Here was one who had performed *“much evil to thy saints.”* Once again we find that the book of Acts demands that we put away all prejudices and prejudging of individuals. While the Ethiopian and Saul would be unlikely converts upon first glance they apparently were able to be changed by the power of the gospel. Ananias would come to learn this lesson to (see study # 30).
 2. Ananias uses the phrase, *“all that call upon thy name.”* Let us recall that this statement was used at Acts 2:21 by Peter as he quoted from the prophet Joel saying, *“And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* The idea of *“calling upon the name of God”* is to *“invoke”* or *“appeal”* to the name of God for spiritual help (LS 292). This is man’s way of reaching out to God for help due to the sin of our lives. After Peter’s Pentecost sermon three thousand people were baptized for the remission of their sins and Peter states they had *“saved themselves from this crooked generation”* (Acts 2:40). Man had called out for help and Jesus saved them by forgiving them of their sins once they were baptized (see study # 7).
- F. *“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (9:15-16).*
1. The Lord’s response to Ananias reveals that Saul was a hand picked man by God to preach the gospel. The Lord prophetically looks into the future of the life of Saul and sees him preaching the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and to the house of Israel (i.e., Jews).
 2. Not only would Saul be found in the future preaching to Gentiles, kings, and Jews but he would also experience much suffering at the hands of ungodly men. As Saul persecuted Christians even so shall he be the subject of such persecution (see II Corinthians 11 for a list of things Paul suffered) (see study # 51).

- G. *“And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. And he was certain days with the disciples there were at Damascus”* (9:17-19).
1. Ananias does not argue with the Lord regarding whether or not Saul was worthy of such blessings. The disciple of the Lord obeys the Lord’s command and comes to the house where Saul was. Ananias laid his hands upon Saul and his sight was miraculously restored.
 2. Ananias tells Saul that he has been sent by Jesus that he may not only have restored sight but also that he would be *“filled with the Holy Spirit.”* At Acts 22:14-15 Luke records Paul’s words about this conversation. Ananias there stated, *“The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.”* Ananias, with obscure words, is telling Saul that he will be an apostle; i.e., one who has seen and heard the Lord. Saul was *“appointed”* as a *“chosen vessel”* to serve the Lord in the capacity of an apostle of Jesus Christ. Saul would thereby be *“filled with the Holy Spirit”* in the exact manner that the previous twelve were on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). The apostles were appointed to know the will of God having seen and heard the Righteous one and thereby were *“filled with the Holy Spirit.”* Saul would only have divinely inspired knowledge given to him by the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 1:11ff) but he would also be able to perform miraculous manifestations of the Spirit (see study # 26; Holy Spirit).
 3. Notice lastly that Saul was baptized. Why did this happen? Did Ananias tell him to do this? Notice that at Acts 22:16 Luke records Ananias’ words to Saul saying, *“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.”* Ananias preached the same sermon to Saul that Peter had to those in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and the same sermon Philip did to those of Samaria and the Ethiopian eunuch. That sermon involved preaching Jesus. We know exactly what Ananias taught Saul. It was no different than the previous sermons that caused men and women to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins and saved from the existing crooked generation (see study # 53).

II. Saul Preaches Jesus (9:20-31):

A. *“And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God”* (9:20).

1. The *“synagogue”* = “An assembly or congregation of Jews for the purpose of worship and study (Acts 13:43) or the building where such an assembly met (Lk. 7:5)” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 676). “A gathering of people, a congregation... the custom grew up in postexilic times of reading the scriptures in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. It must be understood that the main object of these Sabbath day assemblages in the synagogues was not public worship in its stricter sense but religious instruction, which to an Israelite was, above all, instruction in the law. Thus Josephus says (Apion 2.7), ‘Not once or twice or more frequently did our lawgiver command us to hear the law, but to come together weekly, with the cessation of other work,



The facade of the large synagogue at Kefr Bir'im in northern Galilee. The relief on the lintel once depicted winged victories or "Nike" that have been deliberately mutilated (3rd cent. A.D.) (J. Finegan)

to hear the law and to learn it accurately.’ Philo called the synagogues ‘houses of instruction,’ in which ‘the native philosophy’ was studied and every kind of virtue taught” (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary pp. 1229). The key to understanding modern day assemblies and the authority for meeting in “church buildings” has founding principles in this study. The word synagogue (Greek *sunagoge*) = “a collecting, gathering; a Christian assembly or congregation... the congregation of a synagogue; hence, the place itself, a synagogue (Lk. 7:5)” (Moulton 385). The Greek word “*ekklesia*” (church) is also defined as an “assembly... a Christian congregation, I Cor. 14:4, et al” (Moulton 125). Such a gathering to worship and learn the laws of God would infer (but not demand) that a place or building be necessary (see study # 58; Church Buildings).

2. Saul “*straightway*” went to the Sabbath day assembly of Jews and “*proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God.*” The Sabbath day synagogue was apparently a period where open study occurred. Individuals would be given the opportunity to speak out to the congregation. The apostle Paul would have certainly been given such an opportunity seeing that his reputation preceded him (all knew of his Pharisee education and zeal for God).
 3. The proclamation of Jesus being the Son of God no doubt took the Jews off guard. When Saul preached Christ he not only spoke of Jesus being the Son of God but also taught everything that Peter, Philip, and the other apostles taught regarding Jesus and man’s salvation (see study # 53).
- B. “*And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? And he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ*” (9:21-22).
1. The Jews had heard of Saul’s intention for coming to Damascus as was stated at Acts 9:1-2. All those who “*called on this name*” (i.e., Jesus), that is, those who cried out to God for help through the forgiving blood of Jesus Christ, were to be tried and convicted (see study # 7). Saul wanted all such men to pay a high price. This same Saul was now preaching that Jesus was the Son of God. The Jews are confused and cannot believe their ears.
 2. Though Saul had a reputation as a Pharisee he no longer entertained that school of thought. He had been converted by the seeing and hearing of Jesus Christ and the teaching of Ananias. Saul increased in strength in that his courage and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ grew. Saul proved, by the scriptures and the life of Christ, that Jesus was the Son of God that the prophets had foretold of coming into the world. This Jesus would save man from the consequences of their sins. This proving was a “*confounding*” of the Jews in Damascus. To “*confound*” (*sugcheo*) = “to frustrate” (LS 756). Apparently Saul frustrated the effort of the Jews to stamp out all faith in Jesus Christ (see study # 51).
- C. “*And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him: but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket*” (9:23-25).
1. The apostle Paul helps us with the chronology and geography in his epistle to the Galatians. Paul had traveled outside of Damascus after being baptized for the remission of his sins and then returns to Damascus and preaches for three years before going to Jerusalem (see Gal. 1:13-18) (see study # 51).
 2. Saul frustrated the Jews for “*many days*” and apparently this frustration grew to great levels. The Jews, being utterly frustrated with Saul’s teaching on Jesus, made plans to end his life. Day and night they watch the gate of the city of Damascus so that they might capture him as he left the city and murder him.
 3. Saul gained intelligence of the Jew’s plot and was able, with the aid of other disciples, to escape the city of Damascus. The city was apparently a walled city. Saul was lowered to the ground outside the city by a basket and rope.
 4. Such events remind us of the danger that these early Christians faced when preaching the truth.

III. Saul Travels back to Jerusalem (9:26-31):

- A. “*And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the*

apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus” (9:26-27).

1. Saul had been away from Jerusalem for at least three years (see notes above). Though the church had been evacuated from Jerusalem, save the apostles, it had now regained a congregation of saints. Upon entry into Jerusalem Saul seeks to join the disciples as he had been joined to those in Damascus.
 2. No small stir would have occurred over this event. The last thing that the apostles had known of Saul was that he left Jerusalem with permission from the high priest to capture and bring back, bound in chains, any one who called upon the name of Jesus so that they may be tried and slaughtered. Seeing this was the last that they had heard of Saul Luke records, *“they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.”*
 3. Barnabas was introduced to us at Acts 4:36-37. Barnabas intervenes for Saul bringing him to the apostles and telling them about Saul’s experience on the road to Damascus. The book of Galatians reveals further that Barnabas presented Saul to Peter and James alone. The two accept Saul and he stays in Peter’s house for fifteen days (see Gal. 1:19).
 4. Note that *“preaching boldly in the name of Jesus”* meant confounding or frustrating the work of the unbelieving Jews. The church today needs men to boldly preach Jesus by confounding the purpose of denominational and erring brethren’s teaching (see study # 11).
- B. *“And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord; and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they were seeking to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus” (9:28-30).*
1. Paul accompanies the apostles and disciples everywhere they went after being accepted by them.
 2. Preaching *“boldly in the name of the Lord”* is not only a confounding of the erring but also a *“disputing”* against them. To *“dispute”* (*suzeteo*) = “to debate, to hold discourse with, argue, reason” (Moulton 381). Debating truth is nothing new to our day. Saul did it in the newly formed church days. Recall that Jude commanded that the disciples of the Lord *“contend earnestly for the faith”* (Jude 3) (see study # 11).
 3. The careful student of God’s word will notice something different about Saul as compared to the other apostles and disciples. **Saul was obviously more militant in his approach to others regarding preaching Jesus.** We do not read of the other apostles or disciples being individually sought after that they may be killed as we do Saul. Saul had to escape from Damascus as he now has to do in Jerusalem by the aid of other disciples. It seems that this ought to teach us that God uses His saints in different capacities. While the apostles at Jerusalem were no doubt preaching Jesus we find that there is something different to Saul’s style (see I Cor. 15:10). He was so bold and forceful that it gained greater attention from the enemies of the cross. His arguing and debating with the Jews frustrated them and he didn’t let up (see study # 51).
 4. Saul travels from Jerusalem to Caesarea and then further north to Tarsus. While in Tarsus, Saul went on preaching tours through Syria and Cilicia (see Gal. 1:21) (see map at the end of this study over the travels of Saul of Tarsus).
- C. *“So the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied” (9:31).*
1. Luke records a picture of the church now as opposed to that drawn at Acts 8:1ff. Persecution against the saints appears to have slowed so that Christians were *“at peace.”* A time of peace afforded stability in the lives of the saints and granted them an opportunity to be *“edified”* (*oikodome*) = “a building or structure” (LS 546). “A builder, architect... to build a house; to build... to repair... to advance a person’s spiritual condition, to edify... a spiritual structure, as instanced in the Christian body... religious advancement” (Moulton 284). This religious advancement occurred by the work of the apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelist, and teachers in each of the churches (see Eph. 4:11).
 2. Edification (religious advancement) of saints equated to the church *“walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.”* To *“fear”* God is to keep His commandments (cf. Deut. 5:29; 6:1-3; Titus 3:8; I Pet. 1:17). My obedience is thereby evidence of my fear of God much like obedience is evidence in my faith (cf. Jn. 3:36; Heb. 11:1ff) and love (Jn. 14:15, 23) of

God (see study # 59; The Fear of God). Luke helps us see that in order for the saints of God to “*walk in the fear of the Lord*” there must be spiritual advancement in the lives of each member. With spiritual growth comes “*comfort of the Holy Spirit*” in that the more I know the more I understand my position in this life and the life to come. Knowledge thereby grants the Christian a peculiar walk and affords comfort of mind (see study # 60; Bible Study).

IV. More Acts of Peter (9:32-43):

- A. “*And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied*” (9:32-33).
1. Luke leaves the narrative of the life of Saul and goes back to tell us what Peter was doing while Saul preached in Tarsus, Cilicia, and Syria. Earlier Luke revealed Peter’s travels to take him from Gaza to Caesarea (he would have certainly passed through Lydda). Apparently Peter’s preaching had been successful due to the fact that there are existing “*saints that dwelt at Lydda*” (see map over the Travels of the Apostle Peter at the end of this study).
 2. We have already been introduced to people who were stricken with “palsy” at Acts 8:7-8. There we defined palsy (*paraluo*) as having “paralyzed body limbs” (Moulton 305)... “Designates various conditions characterized by a loss of ability to move or to control movements of the body. It generally results from damage to the brain or spinal cord or from a disease of the central nervous system” (ISBE, v. 3, pp. 649). Aeneas had been paralyzed for eight years.
- B. “*And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord*” (9:34-35).
1. Peter, being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:8), simply spoke and Aeneas’ palsy was divinely healed.
 2. When “*all that dwelt at Lydda and Sharron saw him they turned to the Lord.*” The consequences of the Apostles’ divine miracles was to confirm their preaching as truth (Mk. 16:20). Miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit through divinely inspired men gained audiences and resulted in the salvation of people’s souls (see Acts 2:41; 3:1-4:4; 5:1-14; 8:5-12). The preaching and the confirming miracles caused men to call upon the name of Jesus for aid to their dilemma of sin and thereby they “*turned to the Lord.*” The “*turning*” occurred because preaching exposed sin.
- C. “*Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us*” (9:36-38).
1. Tabitha was apparently a very well loved woman. She was known for her “*good works and almsdeeds.*” The word “*almsdeeds*” (*eleemosune*) = “pity, compassion Matt. 6:2-4; Lk. 11:41” (Moulton 131)... “pity, mercy: a charity, alms, compassionate” (LS 249). Here is an aspect of Bible love that considers the physical well being of others (see study # 61; Bible Love).
 2. Tabitha happens to get sick and die while Peter was at nearby Lydda (see map on Peter’s travels). This woman was so beloved of the saints that they sent for Peter to come to Joppa that he might raise her from the dead.
- D. “*And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them*” (9:39).
1. Peter does not delay. Once he finds out about Dorcas he immediately leaves Lydda and travels back with the two men who came to him.
 2. Peter arrives in Joppa and is led to the upper chamber of the house Dorcas’ body lay. Peter is met by weeping widows who had been recipients of Dorcas’ love gifts of coats and garments which she had made them.
- E. “*But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up*” (9:40).

1. Peter had previously witnessed the Lord Jesus Christ raising three people from the dead. There was the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5:40-41), the son of the widow at Nain (Lk. 7:11-15), and Lazarus (Jn. 11:36-44). Peter was confident that as Jesus Christ healed Aeneas at Acts 9:34, and as Christ had previously raised people from the dead that he, through the power of Christ, could do so now.
 2. Peter instructs the crowd of widows and onlookers to vacate the room that he may be with Tabitha alone. Peter prays to the Lord on her behalf and her life returns to her dead body upon the command to “*arise.*”
- F. “*And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord*” (9:41-42).
1. Once again a miracle was responsible for the conversion of “*many.*” Peter performed a miracle that was extraordinary in the eyes of those of Joppa. Such an event could only be of divine origin.
 2. The equation reads thus: Peter raises Tabitha from the dead and consequentially “*many believed on the Lord.*” We know by this statement that Peter did not take credit for the miracle but rather gave credit to Jesus Christ. Such an event gave an opportunity to Peter to preach Christ. Let us recall that it was due to the miraculous speaking of tongues coupled with Peter’s sermon on Pentecost that caused many to “*believe*” (see Acts 2:44). We also see that “*belief*” was the result of many Jews in Jerusalem “*hearing the word*” of Peter as he preached Christ (Acts 4:4). The Samaritans and Simon had “*believed*” the message of Philip (Acts 8:12-13). All those who “*believed*” were taught to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 9:35-38). When the scriptures speak of people “*believing*” and recognized as the saints of God it is inferred that they not only heard and obeyed but that they are currently doing all within their convicted will to remain faithful to the Lord (see Jn. 3:36) (see study # 62; Believing in Jesus).
- G. “*And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner*” (9:43).
1. Peter remains “*many days*” in Joppa (see map on Travels of the Apostle Peter).
 2. Peter took advantage of the hospitality of Simon, who was a tanner. A “*tanner*” (*burseus*) = “*from bursa, a hide, a tanner, leather-dresser*” (Moulton 74). Simon’s occupation was working with leather (possibly making tents, shoes, belts, and various clothes).

Chapter 10

The Conversion of Cornelius

I. The identity of Cornelius (10:1-8):

- A. “*Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band*” (10:1).
1. Cornelius was a “*centurion*” i.e., “*a captain of the sixty centuries (companies of one hundred men) in the Roman legion* (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary pp. 217).
 2. The “*Italian band*” or cohort was made up of Roman citizens. This cohort was one of five stationed near or at Caesarea (ISBE v. 1, pp. 297). A cohort is one of the ten divisions of a Roman legion, consisting of 300 to 600 men (AHD 289). The Italian band would be one of the ten divisions that made up the Roman legion for this geographic area. A legion is “*the major unit of the Roman army consisting of 3,000 to 6,000 infantry troops and 100 to 200 cavalrymen* (AHD 722). Apparently there could have been anywhere from three to six divisions (a company of 100 men) of the Italian band. Cornelius was centurion over one of the Italian bands.
- B. “*a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always*” (10:2).
1. Cornelius, a man of great authority, was also a “*devout man.*” The word “*devout*” means, “*pious or religious*” (LS 333). Cornelius was apparently a proselyte to Judaism and kept the Mosaic Law as did his household (Gen. 17:9-14; Lev. 17:8ff; 22:17-19; Num. 15:14-16). As a converted Gentile he “*feared God with all his house*” (i.e., Cornelius was a law abiding citizen of the Mosaic System) (see Deut. 6:1ff.). Note that being a “*religious man*” was not enough to save Cornelius (see Acts 11:14).

2. Cornelius, like Tabitha, was a compassionate man who gave alms (acts of compassion such as providing food or clothing to the poor) to the people. Cornelius was also a praying man.
- C. *“He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God”* (10:3-4).
1. The *“ninth hour”* was the *“hour of prayer”* (see Acts 3:1). The division of time, by prayers, was the third hour (morning), ninth hour (afternoon) and twelfth hour (evening). David prayed at these times (Ps. 55:17) as did Daniel (Dan. 4:10-13; 6:10). Cornelius was indeed praying at this time (see Acts 10:30). The Jews actually divided the day up into four parts (i.e., early morning, 3,6, and 9th hour). These four parts are depicted by Jesus in the parable of the Householder who hired laborers (Matt. 20:1-16).
 2. An angel appears unto Cornelius *“in a vision.”* God often times communicated divine revelation to people through visions (see Dan. 7:1; Obed. 1:1; Joel 2:28ff; Amos 1:1; Zechariah 1:7ff). The angel of God tells Cornelius that God has heard his prayers and recognized his *“alms”* (i.e., acts of compassion toward the poor). Cornelius’ prayers and alms came up to God as a *“memorial”* (*mnemosunon*) = “honorable remembrance” (Moulton 270).
 3. Question: How could God hear the prayers of Cornelius if God does not hear the prayers of sinners (Jn. 9:31)? The answer is simple:
 - a. God’s attentive eye and ear is looking to those men and women who are genuinely seeking Him. Jesus said, *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knowck, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened”* (Matt. 7:7-8). Cornelius was clearly seeking God with an honest heart of faith.
 - b. Secondly, we must understand that this is a time when the Mosaic Law was first abrogated. Cornelius, as a God fearing obedient man, was doing what God had commanded in times before Christ came into the world. Cornelius, like the Ethiopian eunuch and Saul of Tarsus, needed to be directed in the right paths.
- D. *“And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodges with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa”* (10:5-8).
1. Cornelius obeys the angel’s voice and sends trusted men to Joppa for Peter.
 2. Joppa was a coastal town located about 20 miles south of Caesarea.

II. Peter’s Heavenly Vision (10:9-16):

- A. *“Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour:”* (10:9).
1. The apostle Peter was also a devout man of God who prayed regularly.
 2. Peter goes up on top of the house, probably for privacy, and prays to God. The time is the 6th hour (corresponding to our 3:00 PM).
- B. *“and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven”* (10:10-16).
1. Peter falls into a *“trance”* (*ekstasis*) = “a displacement; hence, a displacement of the mind from its ordinary state self possession” (Moulton 147). Peter miraculously sees the heavens open and a great sheet coming down while in this state of mental displacement from his bodily location.
 2. Within the sheet are various four footed beasts and creeping things that Peter recognizes as *“common and unclean”* (see Lev. 11:1-27 and Deut. 14:1-20). The divine voice commands Peter to eat yet the conscience Jew proclaims that he has never eaten an unclean animal and cannot

possibly do so now. Three times Peter is commanded to eat and apparently three times Peter rejected the voice. Then the sheet ascended back into heaven.

3. Note that the divine voice proclaimed, *“What God hath cleansed make not thou common.”* The interpretation of the heavenly sheet with unclean animals will be understood through the reading of this chapter. Cornelius was an unclean Gentile yet Peter was to learn that Christ’s blood was shed for men of all nations (see Acts 10:28).

III. Cornelius’ Household servants and devout Soldier come to Peter (10:17-23):

- A. *“Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon’s house, stood before the gate, and called and asked whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, were lodging there. And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them”* (10:17-20).
 1. Peter is *“perplexed”* (curiously contemplating and desiring to understand) about the vision. While Peter is contemplating the vision the three men that Cornelius sent from Caesarea to Joppa are at Peter’s door.
 2. While Peter contemplates the vision the Holy Spirit speaks to him and reveals that Cornelius’ three men seek him. The Spirit commands Peter to go with them without questions or doubt. Peter would now believe that whatever these men wanted with him it was God’s will for him to go.
- B. *“And Peter went down to the men, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that fears God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee. So he called them in and lodged them. And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him”* (10:21-23).
 1. Peter has been commanded by the Spirit to go with these men without doubting. Upon hearing why it is that they have come Peter, no doubt, understood what his mission was.
 2. Cornelius had been commanded to *“hear words from Peter”* (see also Acts 11:14). Peter was consequentially commanded to preach the gospel to these Gentiles.

IV. Peter travels to Joppa with Cornelius’ three men and some Disciples from Caesarea (10:24-33):

- A. *“And on the morrow they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends. And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man”* (10:24-26).
 1. Peter arrives at Cornelius’ house where the centurion had gathered many of his family members and friends. Such an event speaks volumes as to what Cornelius thought about his experience with God’s divine instructions. He apparently wanted many others to *“hear the words of Peter.”*
 2. When Cornelius meets Peter he falls at his feet and begins to worship him. Peter quickly pulls Cornelius to his feet and explains that he is just a man.
- B. *“And as he talked with him, he went in, and finding many come together: and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean:”* (10:27-28).
 1. Once Peter entered into Cornelius’ house he finds *“many come together.”* Peter, knowing that his audience knew the law regarding a Jew coming into a Gentile’s house, justified his presence by telling them his divine vision. While we find no such statement in the Mosaic Law it seems that passages such as Lev. 18:24-30 infer such. The prophet Amos had referred to the Gentiles and their land as being *“unclean”* at Amos 7:17. The idea of a Jew being defiled by *“one of another nation”* comes from the idea of these people’s religious priorities being different. God was concerned that such contact with these nations would influence the Israelites to take up their idolatrous practices (see Deut. 20:16-18).
 2. Peter’s explanation of his presence in a Gentile’s house included God’s statement to him. The Lord said, *“What God hath cleansed, make not thou common”* (see Acts 10:15). That which is

“*common*” is identified as “*unclean*” (unacceptable to God / see Acts 10:14). Peter now applies the vision to his current situation:

- a. He is in the presence of unclean Gentiles.
 - b. God has commanded him to come to their house that he may preach Jesus to them.
 - c. Those who believe on Jesus will have their sins forgiven and no longer viewed as unclean (see Acts 10:43).
 - d. Peter now understands that the unclean Gentiles are to be cleansed by the precious blood of Christ just as the Jews. They too are worthy of hearing the gospel message!
- C. *“Wherefore also I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me. And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodges in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord”* (10:29-33).
1. Cornelius answers Peter’s question regarding why he sent for him. Cornelius rehearses the divine event that transpired four days ago while he was praying at the “*ninth hour of prayer*.” The three men that Cornelius sent to fetch Peter reveal that the Spirit had commanded Peter to come to Cornelius that he may “*hear words from thee*” (Acts 10:22).
 2. Cornelius confirms his messenger’s words by also stating that he (and his household) are ready to “*hear all things that Peter has been commanded by the Lord to speak*.” Cornelius recognizes Peter’s divine mission and Peter recognizes God’s purpose for sending him to Joppa. The first step in the direction of receiving forgiveness of sins is “*hearing*.”

V. Peter Preaches Jesus to the Gentiles (10:34-48):

- A. *“And Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is acceptable to him”* (10:34-35).
1. Seeing the opportunity to preach to an audience of Gentiles that they might be saved Peter proclaims, “*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons...*” The idea of being a “*respecter*” (*prosopoleptes*) of persons is “not one who shows partiality” (AG 720). God did not choose the Jews only for salvation. Salvation has always been designed to come unto all nations (see Gen. 12:1ff compared to Gal. 3:8, 16). Peter would now fulfill the Lord’s prophecy given at Matthew 16:19 where He said, “*I will give thee (Peter) the keys to the kingdom of heaven*.”
 2. Who is “*acceptable*” (*dektos*) to God? The Greek word *dektos* means “approved” (Moulton 88). To be approved of God one must meet His standards. The apostle Peter would later write, “*but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy*” (1 Pet. 1:15-16). The word “*holy*” (*hagios*) = “separate from common condition and use; dedicated... hallowed... sanctification, sanctity... separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, regard or reverence as holy” (Moulton 3). God’s will for man is that he be holy (separate from sin [the common condition and use], cleansed, and purified). Man comes to be cleansed of sin through the precious blood of Jesus Christ by baptism (see Acts 2:38). Peter’s objective was therefore to preach the gospel to these Gentiles that they might be baptized for the remission of their sins and be holy and acceptable to the Lord.
 3. Furthermore, Peter explains the acceptable state of man being that of one who “*fears God and works righteousness*.” Here is proof that man cannot simply profess a faith in Jesus and then expect to be accepted by God (see study # 60; Works of the Christian). Those accepted by God not only say, “I believe in Jesus,” but they manifest a fear of God in their lives by works of righteousness (see Deut. 6:1ff; Jn. 3:36). James thereby states, “*faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself*” (James 2:17). Note also that fear and consequential lawful living are not enough to make one considered holy either. Cornelius was a man who feared God and worked righteousness (see Acts 10:2, 22). Cornelius; however, was not “*saved*” (i.e., forgiven of his sins) (see Acts 11:14). As we shall see, he and his household needed to be baptized for the remission of their sins.

- B. *“The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is **Lord of all**) that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (10:36-38).*
1. The household of Cornelius was now *“hearing”* what God divinely directed their way by the Apostle Peter.
 2. Revelation through Jesus Christ first came to the Jews (vs. 36); however, Jesus is *“Lord of all”* (vs. 36b). Though the preaching of Jesus was directed at the Jews, it was no secret to the Gentiles. The words of Jesus began in Galilee, which was very close to Caesarea. No doubt Cornelius and his household were very familiar with the teachings and miracles of Jesus (vs. 37). Since Cornelius and his household were familiar with Jesus, Peter had a place to begin regarding the gospel message.
 3. Peter states the facts regarding Jesus:
 - a. God *“anointed”* (*chriono*) = *“to anoint by way of instituting to a dignity, function, or privilege or to smear oil upon one in ceremonial manner to indicated consecration”* (Moulton 439). God applied the Holy Spirit and power to Jesus and thereby signified to the world that Jesus is the Christ.
 - b. The purpose of such an anointing is stated. Jesus would have the Holy Spirit and power that He may do good and heal all that were oppressed of the devil.
- C. *“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree” (10:39).*
1. Peter and the other Apostles witnessed the anointed Christ teaching and healing those afflicted by the devil.
 2. Peter contrasts the compassion of Christ with the cold blooded Jews. The very people who were taught, heard, and saw with their eyes the miracles of Jesus *“hung him on a tree”* (i.e., they crucified him). This is an interesting moment. The previous cases of those converted were Jews. Peter convicted them of the sin of crucifying Jesus. These Gentiles of Cornelius’ house were not directly involved in the crucifixion of Christ. This being the case Peter would need to convince them of their need to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.
- D. *“Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead” (10:40-41).*
1. Peter’s gospel sermon to Cornelius’ household includes the following:
 - a. Cornelius and his household are told to *“hear”* the gospel (Acts 10:33).
 - b. Peter preaches that Jesus is *“Lord of all”* (not just the Jews) (Acts 10:36).
 - c. Peter challenges Cornelius and his household to contemplate the man Jesus that walked the earth and began His teaching in Galilee. The life, teachings, and miracles of Jesus had in no way escaped the knowledge of these Gentiles (Acts 10:37).
 - d. Now that Peter has directed their mind to Christ the Apostle explains that this Jesus had been anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power that he may heal and do good (Acts 10:38).
 - e. The Jews killed Jesus by hanging him on a tree (Acts 10:39).
 - f. Three days after Jesus’ death God raised him from the dead (Acts 10:40).
 - g. Jesus appeared in the resurrected state to the Apostles (Acts 10:41).
 2. Peter explains to Cornelius’ household why he, as an apostle, is qualified to tell them these historical facts. The apostles have heard and witnessed these things!
- E. *“And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believes on him shall receive **remission of sins**” (10:42-43).*
1. When Jesus appeared to the apostles, in the resurrected state, he charged them to *“preach unto the people”* and to *“testify”* that he is indeed the Christ that the OT prophets foretold of coming into the world to save man from the consequences of their sins (see Acts 3:22-25) (see study # 61; The Apostles’ Work).

2. Not only was Jesus anointed with the Holy Spirit and power but he was “*ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.*” To be “*ordained*” (*horizo*) = “to appoint, fix determinately, appoint” (Moulton 292). *Theos* (the Godhead) appointed the judgment of humanity to the Lord Jesus Christ (see John 12:44ff).
 3. Peter now reveals the climax of his sermon to Cornelius and his household. God had commanded Cornelius to send for Peter that he may hear words about Jesus Christ. It is through Christ alone that man “*shall receive remission of sins.*” The great treasure revealed in God’s word is found right here. All the teachings, stories, ordinances, sacrifices, and chronology is all about man receiving the forgiveness of his sins! Those who miss this have wasted their time studying God’s word. Forgiveness comes through Jesus! Man gains forgiveness by “*belief.*” Faith; however, is not the end of the story as far as man’s part in receiving that which Christ came to give (see study # 62; The Forgiveness of Sins).
- F. “*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God*” (10:44-46).
1. Luke reveals the fact that not only Gentiles were present at this discussion but also, “*they of the circumcision*” (i.e., Christian Jews that continued to keep the Mosaic Law).
 2. While Peter spoke these words of salvation to Cornelius and his household “*the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word.*”
 - a. The word “*fell*” (*epiipto*) = “to fall upon or over another... to attack, assail” (LS 298). “To throw one’s self upon” (Moulton 158). The Holy Spirit threw himself upon the household of Cornelius. There is only one other time that the Holy Spirit fell on people to this point of our study. Acts 2:1ff. reveals the Holy Spirit falling upon the Apostles giving them the ability to miraculously speak in tongues.
 - b. Note that the throwing of the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius is equated to “*pouring out the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” The “*gift*” is the forgiveness of sins that came to the Gentiles by way of pouring out of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38). Knowing the who, what, and the work of the Holy Spirit helps us understand that the Spirit gave these Gentiles the miraculous ability to speak in tongues and the words were of a divine order. Such an event would be an unequivocal sign that God intends the Gentiles to be forgiven of their sins just as the Jews. When the Jews saw this outpouring of the Spirit upon the Gentiles they rightly conclude that God’s gift of salvation (Gift of the Holy Spirit) belongs to all flesh. As the rushing of wind and tongues fell upon the apostles on Pentecost to illustrate that God approved of their teachings even so this miraculous event proved that God approves the Gentiles for salvation. Truly Jesus is “*Lord of all*” (Acts 10:36).
- G. “*Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days*” (Acts 10:47-48).
1. Peter clearly states that the Gentiles have now received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the same divine way that the Apostles had it “*at the beginning*” (for this statement we have to go to Acts 11:15). The “*beginning*” is obviously the Day of Pentecost when the Apostles alone were baptized in the Holy Spirit. These Gentiles were now “*baptized in the Holy Spirit*” just as the apostles were on the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 1:5, 8; 11:16). This, without question, proves that God intends for the Gentiles to be forgiven of sins too.
 2. We must note that up to this point Cornelius was religious, feared God, prayed often, gave to the poor, had heard the word about the life and work of Christ, had believed, and even received miraculous power from the Holy Spirit but yet Peter tells them that there is still baptism that needs to be administered.
 3. Let us recall that the function of Peter’s visit to Cornelius and his household was that they would be forgiven of their sins (Acts 10:43) and consequentially saved (Acts 11:14). Baptism is the final act whereby the obedient man or woman who has heard and believed the gospel must take part of it they expect to receive the forgiveness of their sins (see Acts 2:38).

Chapter 11

I. Peter Explains the conversion of Cornelius and his household of Gentiles to the Jews in Judea (11:1-18):

- A. *“Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, there that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them”* (11:1-3).
1. Word of Peter’s work among the Gentiles spread quickly. The apostles and all brethren of Judea heard that the *“Gentiles also had received the word of God.”* While this was good news to some it was unwelcome news to others. Remember, the Gentiles were viewed by the Jews as *“unclean”* (Amos 7:17).
 2. Those *“of the circumcision”* accused Peter of sin for visiting and eating with Gentiles. Those of the circumcision were obviously Jewish converts to Christianity who continued to hold to the Mosaic Law. These men, at times, even bound their beliefs upon others (see Acts 15:5; Gal. 2:3ff). While Peter was at first of this persuasion (see Acts 10:28) he has been divinely enlightened on the subject (see Acts 10:34).
 3. Note that these men rebuked Peter because they saw him as a man like unto their own selves. Peter was not the first Roman Catholic pope who was identified by the Catholic Church as infallible. People looked at Peter like they would you and I... he was sinner.
- B. *“But Peter began, and expounded the matter unto them in order, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the four footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of heaven. And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man’s house: and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house”* (Acts 11:4-14).
1. Peter reviews his heavenly vision with his Jewish brethren and those of the circumcision. Peter explains that God had showed him unclean animals and commanded that he eat. Next the Lord commanded, *“What God hath cleansed make not thou common.”* Three times he was shown this and then it was taken away.
 2. Peter rehearses Cornelius’ words saying, Send for Peter *“who shall speak thee words whereby thou shalt be saved thou and all thy house.”* Peter’s preaching about Jesus lead Cornelius and his household to be baptized for the remission of their sins and consequentially considered *“saved.”*
 3. We may conclude that since Luke records that *“all thy house”* would be saved infants and children are intended here. There is; however, a problem with this conclusion. It assumes that those of Cornelius’ household included infants and children. Secondly, it assumes that infants and young children have sin to be forgiven of. Thirdly, it assumes that infants and children have the ability to hear and reason about their spiritual welfare. Scriptural authority can in no way be established by reasonable inferences and assumptions. Indeed scripture teaches through inference; however, the inference must be without doubts or assumptions. When things are said to be “probable” or “likely” they can in no way be binding.
- C. *“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit”* (11:15-16).
1. Peter gives information in his defense to those of the circumcision that is not revealed in chapter ten. When Cornelius and his Gentile family (and friends) had the Holy Spirit fall upon them (see

Acts 10:44) they were actually being baptized in the Holy Spirit. We have previously identified baptism of the Holy Spirit at Acts 1:5 as an event that enabled people to “*receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you:*” (Acts 1:8a). This power enabled the apostles to speak in tongues on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff), the Gentiles to speak in tongues (Acts 10:46), and those of John’s baptism to speak in tongues (Acts 19:6). Note that the Holy Spirit “*fell upon*” (Acts 10:44; 8:14-17; 11:15), “*come upon*” (Acts 1:8, 19:6), and “*filled*” (Acts 2:4) men and thereby they were immersed in the Holy Spirit (see study # 3).

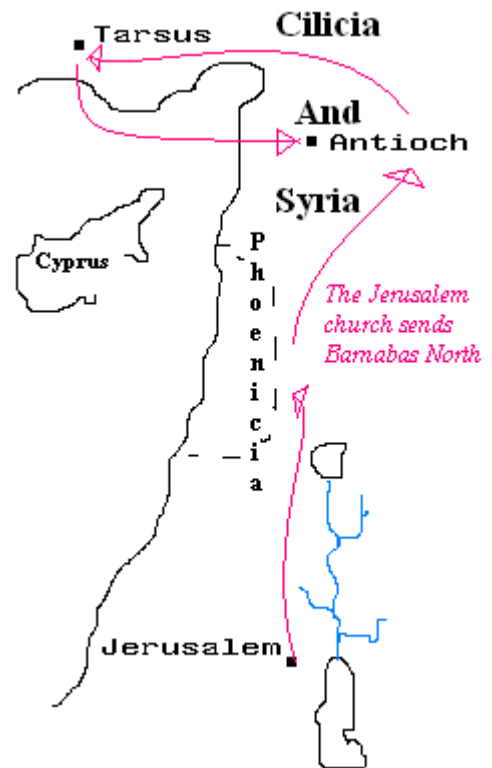
2. Peter recalls the Lord’s instructions regarding baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that people would later be baptized in the Holy Spirit (this would give them power) (see Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Acts 1:5, 8).
 3. The “*beginning*” was the time when the apostles were first baptized in the Holy Spirit. What happened to the apostles on Pentecost has now happened to the Gentiles. The power that proceeded from them was of a divine origin and thereby signified God’s acceptance of them.
- D. “*If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life*” (11:17-18).
1. Peter identifies God’s “*like gift*” in conjunction with the Gentiles’ baptism in the Holy Spirit. God’s “*gift*” is salvation through the forgiveness of sins (see Acts 2:38; 10:43-45; Eph. 2:8; 1:7). How could Peter or anyone else “*withstand God*” in relation to the Gentile’s receiving this gift from God? (see study # 66; Gift of the Holy Spirit).
 2. When those of the circumcision heard this news they had no other recourse than to glorify God and accept the fact that God had “*Granted repentance unto life*” to the Gentiles. Let us remember that man’s salvation is what is under consideration in Acts 10-11:18 (see Acts 11:14). God’s “*gift*” of salvation; however, is conditional. Those of the circumcision recognize that “*repentance*” of sins committed is necessary. “*Works of righteousness*” and “*fear of God*” cause one to be acceptable to God (see Acts 10:35). And baptism in water is necessary (see Acts 10:48) (see study # 8).
 3. Though those of the circumcision accepted the Gentiles they would come to bind unlawful things upon them in the coming days (see Acts 15:1ff).

II. Growth of God’s Kingdom (11:19-26):

- A. “*They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only the Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord” (11:19-21).*
1. After Stephen’s death Christians were severely persecuted in Jerusalem (see Acts 8:1). These men and women were so sought out by people like Saul that they fled for their lives to other cities like Damascus and elsewhere (see Acts 9:1-2). Luke now reveals that the more these people spread the more the kingdom of God grew. What started in Jerusalem moved to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (as well as Damascus and Arabia / see Gal. 1:17). “*Great numbers*” of people were being added to the kingdom of God (see study # 38).
 2. The “*preaching of Jesus*” caused many to “*believe and turn to the Lord.*” To believe and turn to the Lord is much more than making a simple confession and deciding to live right. Preaching Jesus continues to be identified (see study # 63; Preaching Jesus):
 - a. People **heard** the word of God: Christ, his resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins... (Acts 10:22, 33).
 - b. People **believed** the message of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 8:37; 9:42).
 - c. **Confession** of the name of Jesus Christ is inferred in all cases (Rom. 10:9).
 - d. **Repentance** (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18).
 - e. **Baptism** (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36, 38)
 - f. A life of Faith (Acts 6:7; 10:35; 11:22-23)

B. *“And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord”* (11:22-23).

1. News of the growth of God’s kingdom into the areas of Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch reached the ears of the apostles and elders of the *“church which was in Jerusalem.”* To help in the spiritual growth of these churches the church sends out Barnabas. Barnabas has already been identified at Acts 4:36 as being acquainted with the apostles and at Acts 9:27 he becomes a companion of Saul. Barnabas saw that *“the grace of God”* had been applied to these people of other lands and was *“glad.”* The *“grace of God”* is none other than God’s gift of salvation (see Eph. 2:8 compared with 1:7) (see study # 64; God’s Grace). We know that this is so because the subject under consideration is the people having heard Jesus preached and consequentially believing (see Acts 11:20-21).



2. Barnabas *“exhorts”* these new brethren to *“cleave unto the Lord”* (i.e., remain faithful and obedient to the teachings of Christ / see II Thess. 3:6). To *“exhort”* (*parakaleo*) = “to call upon, exhort, admonish, persuade” (Moulton 303). Interestingly, Barnabas is identified as a *paraklete* at Acts 4:36-37. The church knew of his skills and thereby sent him north for this work. Barnabas called upon and persuaded these new Christians to purpose in their heart to *“cleave unto the Lord”* (i.e., remain faithful). Due to Barnabas’ work there were many people, *“added unto the Lord”* (i.e., heard, believed, confessed, repented, and baptized / See acts 2:41) (see study # 38).

C. *“And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”* (11:25-26).

1. Barnabas travels from Antioch of Syria to Tarsus to find Saul. Tarsus was Saul’s home town (see Acts 9:11). Together, Barnabas and Saul travel back to Antioch of Syria and preach for a whole year to the church edifying them (see study # 65; Edification). There are two points of interest here:

- a. Edification was occurring from preachers to members of the church. Members of the church were encouraged to learn more about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Herein is a work of the church (see study # 67; Work of the Church / Edification).
- b. Secondly, note that we have viewed two churches in this context (the church in Jerusalem and the church at Antioch of Syria). While the church is God’s kingdom it is divided geographically into local assemblies of God’s people. This context clearly infers that the saints assembled (were a church) in each city wherein they lived. The church (universal; i.e., God’s kingdom) could in no way assemble as a whole (see study # 68; The Local and Universal Church). When these churches assembled men such as Barnabas and Saul edified them.

2. The believers in Antioch were the first to wear the name *“Christian.”* To this point the disciples who had heard, believed, repented, confessed Christ, and baptized were referred to as believers, those of the way, saints, and brethren. There are only two other uses of the word Christian in our NT and that is at I Peter 4:6 and Acts 26:28. The name implies that one represents Christ and His teachings.

III. A Great Famine in the Earth (11:27-30):

- A. *“Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Sprit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius”* (11:27-28).
1. Luke gave us our first time table to work with at Acts 2:1 (i.e., the Day of Pentecost / ~ 33 AD) and now we are given another hint at a date. The famine under consideration occurred during the days of “*Claudius*.” **Claudius** “was the fourth Roman emperor. He reigned for over thirteen years (A.D. 41-54), having succeeded Gaius Caesar (Caligula). Caligula had seriously altered the conciliatory policy of his predecessors regarding the Jews and, considering himself a real and corporeal god, had deeply offended the Jews by ordering a statue of himself to be placed in the temple of Jerusalem, as Antiochus Epiphanes had done with the statue of Zeus in the days of the Maccabees (2 Macc. 6:2). Claudius reverted to the policy of Augustus and Tiberius and marked the opening year of his reign by issuing edicts in favor of the Jews (Josephus Ant. Xix.5), who were permitted in all parts of the empire to observe their laws and customs in a free and peaceable manner. Special consideration was given to the Jews of Alexandria, who were to enjoy without molestation all their ancient rights and privileges. The Jews of Rome, however, who had become very numerous, were not allowed to assemble there (Dio Cassius Hist. lx.6.6), an enactment in full correspondence with the general policy of Augustus regarding Judaism in the West... Classical writers report that the reign of Claudius was, from bad harvest or other causes, a period of general distress and scarcity over the whole world” (ISBE. V. 1, pp. 716-717).
 2. Consider these dates of the first five Roman emperors (See chart on the “Political Structure of the Roman Empire and Judea” at the end of this study):
 - a. Gaius Octavius Augustus (27 BC to 14 AD)
 - b. Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus (AD 14 to AD 37).
 - c. Gaius Caesar Germanicus (Caligula) (AD 37 to AD 41).
 - d. Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus (AD 41 to AD 54).
 - e. Nero Claudius Caesar (AD 54 to AD 68).
 3. Jews had relative peace until the reign of Caligula (37-41 AD). The church had been established for approximately 4 years when it began to have trouble under both Roman and Judaic persecution. Claudius restored the previous Jewish favor that Augustus and Tiberius exercised. The church thereby experienced 5 years of hostility from both Rome and their Jewish adversaries.
 4. A prophet by the name of Agabus had been moved by the Holy Spirit to warn the church of an impending famine over “*all the world*.”
- B. *“And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul”* (11:29-30).
1. The principle of Christians taking care of other Christians in need was established at Acts 2:44-46. Though the famine would be over “*all the world*” the Christians of Antioch attempted to meet the needs of only the saints (those in Judea). The Judean churches would have included the church of Jerusalem, Lydda, Gaza, Caesarea, Joppa, Ashdod, and possibly the church in Samaria.
 2. Note that the money collected was sent by the church at Antioch (by the hand of Barnabas and Saul) to the elders of the churches of Judea. The elders would distribute the money to those in need of the congregation they oversaw. This is the first time, in our study, that we run across the word “*elder*” in association with the church of Christ. We know that there were to be elders at every local church due to Luke’s remarks at Acts 14:23. Apparently, sometime between AD 33 and here at around AD 41 the early church had ordained elders (see study # 69; Elders in the Church). Seeing that each church was to have elders that would oversee only their flock of God’s people it is certain that the money delivered to these men were to be distributed among their own. There was not a Bishop or set of elders (Bishops or Pastors) over all the churches of Judea or Macedonia or Galatia etc. Such ideas came of man latter when the Catholic Church established a diocese (i.e., “the district of churches under the jurisdiction of a bishop” [AHD 398]). The apostle Peter said, “*The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: **Tend the flock of***

God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock” (I Peter 5:1-3).

3. What we are seeing is a **pattern** being unfolded before our eyes of the early church and its work. When the saints met they were edified. When the saints helped the needy it has only been needy brethren (no non-Christian relief). When it was determined to send money from one church to another it went by the hands of people from the giving church to the elders of a receiving church.
4. While some may think this to be meticulous and un-necessary let us recall that God does not take lightly those who take religious matters into their own hands. Principles of God’s authoritative ways of worship and Christian living are established early in the OT (see Deut. 4:9-24) as well as the NT (see Phil. 4:9). While churches of Christ today may take money from the church treasury and support the needy of the world we can find absolutely no authority for such actions. When a church takes its money from the common treasury and gives to an institution to do the work of the church they have sinned against God’s ordained pattern. The Saints of God are not at liberty to do as they please in religious matters (see Heb. 8:5) (see study # 68; Institutional Churches).

Chapter 12

I. Herod Agrippa I Kills James and seeks out the life of Peter (12:1-19):

- A. *“Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword” (12:1-2).*
 1. “Herod Agrippa I (10? BC - AD 44), last king of Judea (AD 41-44). A grandson of Herod the Great, Herod Agrippa spent his youth at the court of the Roman emperor Tiberius, where he was appointed companion to the emperor's grandson, Gaius Caesar (later Emperor Caligula). When Caligula acceded to the throne in ad 37, he made Agrippa tetrarch (ruler) of Batanea and Trachonitis, territories east of the Sea of Galilee, in what is now southern Syria. His possessions were later expanded, and in 41 Emperor Claudius I made him king of Judea. To preserve peace, Herod Agrippa adopted a pro-Jewish policy. His extreme personal piety and official support of Jewish interests endeared him to the people but earned him the strong disfavor of both the Roman civil population and the Roman troops in his domains” (Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2002. © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation).
 2. Herod’s affliction began with the killing of *“James the brother of John with the sword.”* This event had to happen at least at the year 41 AD (approximately 8 years after the Kingdom of God [church] was established). Jesus had asked both James and John if they would be *“able to drink the cup that I am about to drink”* (Matt. 20:22). The two respond in the affirmative. James indeed followed through with his pledge of allegiance to Jesus, as he is the first apostle to be murdered for his faith. John would be the last to die.
- B. *“And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And those were the days of unleavened bread. And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people” (12:3-4).*
 1. Herod sought the appeasement of the general population of Judea. He saw that there was hatred between the Jews and Christians and thereby sought to gain the favor of the more popular Jews by killing James who was a prominent member of the church as an Apostle. Herod, after seeing the favorable response of killing James, goes after the next big name Christian; i.e., Peter.
 2. Peter is captured, thrown in prison, and placed under heavy guard (four quaternion of soldiers; i.e., each quaternion was composed of four soldiers – 16 soldiers were thereby assigned to guard Peter). Herod may have heard how that Peter had earlier escaped from prison under the watch of the Sanhedrin council (see Acts 5:17-20).
 3. Herod’s intention was to bring Peter before the Jewish crowds after the Passover and kill him that he may gain even more popularity among the Jews.

- C. *“Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him”* (12:5).
1. The brethren of the church in Jerusalem had just witnessed the death of their beloved James when Peter is apprehended by the same despotic king for the same end.
 2. The brethren thereby prayed earnestly i.e., “eagerly, earnest, literally strained” (AG 245).
- D. *“And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands”* (12:6-7).
1. Peter surely understood that his life would end soon. We are made to marvel at the fact that he was fast asleep when such peril awaited him. Peter may have been sleepless for several days and finally gave in to exhaustion or it may have been that he was confident of his place in heaven if he were to die.
 2. Whatever the case the apostle is awakened in the night by an angel of the Lord and told to rise as his chains from his hands miraculously fell off.
- E. *“And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leads into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews”* (12:8-11).
1. Peter was sleeping with undergarments alone. He is instructed to get his clothes and shoes on quickly.
 2. As Peter escapes from prison with the angel he thinks that he is seeing another vision (much like the one he saw regarding Cornelius and his household of Acts 10). Peter learns that he is experiencing no vision. The apostle has been miraculously delivered out of the hands of Herod and the expectation of the people (no doubt many couldn’t wait to see Peter killed).
- F. *“And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter’s voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel”* (12:12-15).
1. The church of Jerusalem had apparently come together at Mary’s house to pray for the Apostle Peter’s safety. The above mentioned Mary is one of six in the NT. This particular Mary is the mother of John Mark. John Mark is the man who later accompanies Paul and Barnabas on their first tour of preaching. The Apostle Paul latter reveals that John Mark is Barnabas’ cousin (see Col. 4:10). Note that there was great care and concern for one of their fellow saints and so they prayed for him fervently.
 2. A lady named Rhoda hears Peter knocking at the door while everyone else prays. She sees Peter and for joy does not let him in but runs to tell everyone that he is here and alive. The brethren think Rhoda has lost her mind or that she has seen Peter’s angel.
- G. *“But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren . And he departed, and went to another place”* (12:16-17).
1. While the brethren argued over whether Peter was outside the door in physical body or angelic form he continues to knock at the door. When he is finally let in the brethren can scarcely contain themselves for joy over his safety.

2. Peter beckons with his hand to calm them and then tells them to relay what they have seen to James and all the other brethren. This James is none other than the “*Lord’s brother*” (see Gal. 1:19) and elder at the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; Gal. 2:9).
- H. “*Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and tarried there*” (12:18-19).
1. The next day Herod called for Peter that he may execute him in the presence of all the people of Judea.
 2. Peter; however, was no where to be found. The guards were all (either the four guarding Peter or all sixteen) executed for allowing a prisoner to escape.

II. The Death of Herod Agrippa I (12:20-23):

- A. “*Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king’s chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king’s country. And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them*” (12:20-21).
1. Tyre and Sidon are port cities on the Mediterranean. They were located in Phoenicia, which was outside of Herod Agrippa’s jurisdiction yet they depended heavily on Judea for food trade (12:20b). Luke does not tell us why Herod was displeased with those of Tyre and Sidon.
 2. Delegates from Tyre and Sidon had managed to befriend Blastus, the king’s Chamberlain, and thus make positive moves towards lifting the food sanctions against them.
- B. “*And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost*” (12:23).
1. Josephus tells us the reason for Herod’s appearing on this “*set day*” (12:21): Two games were held in honor of Claudius’ successful battles in Britain. Herod appears before the people in the theater with his royal apparel on. Again, Josephus reveals that this apparel was woven with silver so that when the sun’s rays hit the suit, Herod glittered in the light. As Herod began to speak to the assembled theater, the people shouted, “*the voice of a god and not of a man*” (12:23). Apparently Herod accepted this worship as though he were deity. Immediately, God sent an angel to smite Herod with worms because he did not give God the glory (12:23). Herod’s reign ended after only five years.
 2. After Herod Agrippa I’s death Roman Procurators governed Palestine. Josephus writes: “Claudius made the country a Roman province, and sent **Cuspius Fadus** to be its procurator from 44 to 48 AD” (War 2.11.6). After Fadus was **Tiberius Julius Alexander** (AD 46-48), **Publius Ventidius Cumanus** (AD 48 to 52), **Marcus Antonius Felix** (AD 52-59), **Porcius Festus** (AD 59 to 62), and **Luceius Albinus** (AD 62 to 64) (see Political Structure chart at the end of this study).

III. Growth of the Church (12:24-25):

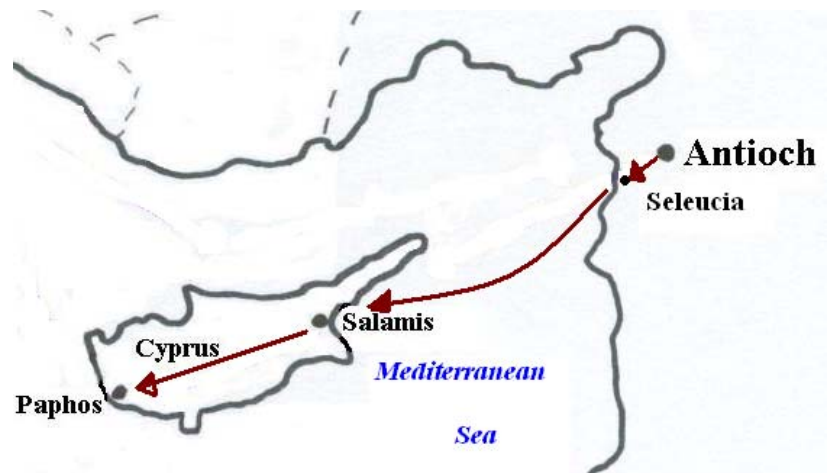
- A. “*But the word of God grew and multiplied*” (12:24).
1. In contrast to the death of Herod and the end of the Herod dynasty in Palestine was the thriving church. Though Herod tried to slow the growth of the church its borders kept swelling.
 2. The church continued to grow as the gospel was preached to the world.
- B. “*And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with John whose surname was Mark*” (12:25).
1. The “*ministration*” under consideration was the relief that the saints of Antioch sent to the needy saints throughout Judea mentioned at Acts 11:29-30.
 2. Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch after delivering the relief funds to the brethren in Judea.

Chapter 13

I. Saul and Barnabas’ First Tour of Preaching (travel from Antioch to Cyprus) (13:1-12):

- A. *“Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul”* (13:1).
1. The church at Antioch is depicted as a strong church with prophets and teachers. These prophets and teachers are listed by name. Their function was church edification (see Eph. 4:11-12).
 2. Manaen was the *“foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch.”* The word *“foster-brother”* is not found in the KJV Bible however in the original text it is there. Nestle and Marshall’s Interlinear text uses the word *suntrophos* (NM 521). The Greek *Suntrophos* = “brought up together with another; generally, living with” (LS 781). Apparently, Herod and Manaen were brought up together in the same house yet not as blood brothers. Luke’s inclusion of this man’s name is important in that it shows how the gospel spread even among dignitaries of the state.
- B. *“And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away”* (13:2-3).
1. The work of the prophets and teachers was to *“minister to the Lord.”* This “ministering” (or service) included revealing divine revelation, teaching the lost and edifying the saved, and visiting those who in prison and or suffering (see Matt. 25:44-45; Acts 11:22-26; Eph. 4:11-12).
 2. The Holy Spirit said (obviously by the mouth of a prophet), *“Separate Barnabas and Saul...”* Separate (*aphorizo*) = “to set apart or select” (Moulton 62). God had called upon Barnabas and Saul to travel the world preaching the gospel and establishing churches. After the church fasted, prayed, and laid their hands upon them the two were sent on their way to accomplish the ordained work of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The word *“fast”* (*nesteuo*) = “fasting, want of food... a fast, religious abstinence from food” (Moulton 277). Jesus instructs His disciples on the methodology of fasting at Matthew 6:16-18. Fasting is no where commanded by the Lord yet we do find examples of men doing so.
 - b. Let us recall that Paul would later say, *“The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”* (Romans 14:17). A test of fellowship can in no way be imposed upon the man who decides by conviction to eat or not eat in a fast. *“Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died”* (14:15b). Paul told the Corinthian brethren, *“But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better”* (I Cor. 8:8).
- C. *“So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant”* (13:4-5).

1. The initial travels of Barnabas and Saul are depicted in the map to the right. The boat trip from Seleucia to Salamis was approximately a 125 mile trip. Barnabas would have been familiar with these travels due to the fact that he was from the island of Cyprus (see Acts 4:36).



2. Once on the island of Cyprus the three begin preaching the gospel in the synagogues of the Jews. We may confidently affirm, at this point of our study, the exact words of Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark. When these men *“proclaimed the word of God”* they taught the exact same thing that Peter preached on Pentecost, that the apostles taught the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 3-4), that Peter and John preached to the Sanhedrin council (Acts 5), that Stephen taught the mob (Acts 7), that Philip taught the Samaritans and the Ethiopian Eunuch

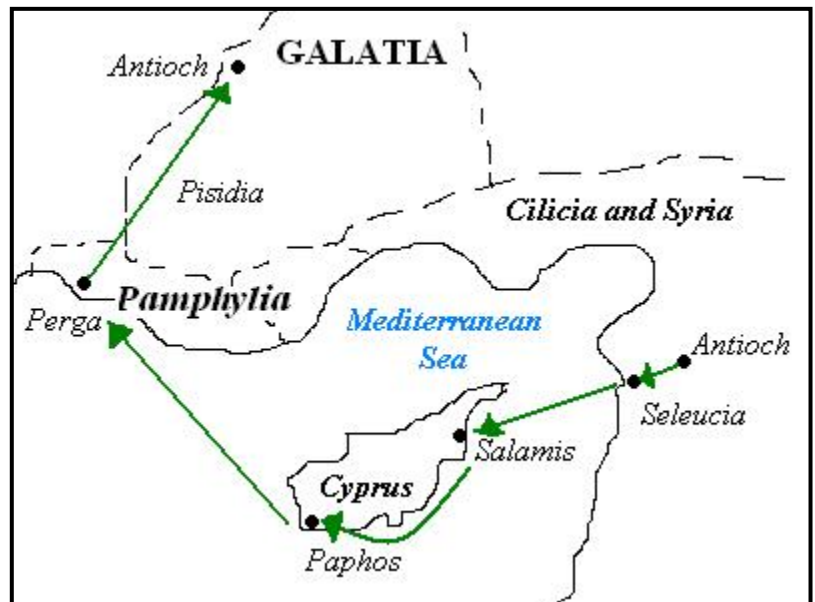
(Acts 8), and that Peter taught Cornelius and his household of Gentiles (Acts 10-11). What success this preaching had on the city of Salamis is not revealed.

- D. *“And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God”* (13:6-7).
1. Paphos is the capital city of Cyprus and located on the extreme western side of the island. Paphos was the dwelling place of the Roman procurator Sergius Paulus. Sergius was a man of *“understanding”* i.e., “intelligent, sagacious, wise, prudent” (LS 775). Sergius had Bar-Jesus with him at this time. Bar-Jesus was a false prophet, a Jew, and a sorcerer. Apparently this Bar-Jesus was doing to Sergius Paulus what Simon had done to the Samaritans. He deceived the Roman procurator with sorcery and laid claims to having the power of God. With this supposed power came teaching and instruction that did not originate from the mind of God.
 2. Sergius, being the wise man that he was, heard of Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark’s appearance in Paphos and thereby sent for them that he might *“hear the word of God.”* Sergius had heard much from Bar-Jesus and may have wanted to confirm the teachings with others who had what he perceived as similar powers and teaching.
- E. *“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”* (13:8-10).
1. When Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark began to teach Sergius Paulus the gospel Elymas the sorcerer *“withstood”* them. The word *“withstood”* (*anthistemi*) = “oppose, resist, stand out against” (Moulton 30). Elymas’ objective was to *“turn aside the proconsul from the faith.”*
 2. With a spirit of **righteous indignation** against those who are recognized as *“enemies”* of Christianity the Apostle Paul (here is the first use of this Roman name that will continue with him throughout the rest of this study) fastened his eyes intensely upon the sorcerer and said, *“O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness...”* Paul knew of the wicked intentions and teachings of Elymas. Elymas was filled with guile and villany in that he had entrapped Sergius Paulus in a web of false doctrines for his own gains. Paul refers to such a one as *“thou son of the devil”* (see also Jesus at Jn. 8:44) (see study # 55 and # 70).
 3. Elymas had not *“ceased to pervert the right ways of the Lord.”* Elymas, like any false teachers of our day, was put in his place with very strong and convicted language. Let us recall the fact that we are studying from the Bible and in this book we are learning patterns and truth that God intends for us to know and emulate. Paul would later tell the Corinthians (I Cor. 11:1) and Philippians (Phil. 4:9) that they must emulate his words and deeds that the God of peace would be with them (see study # 70; Dealing with False Teachers).
- F. *“And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, **believed**, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord”* (13:11-12).
1. The apostle Paul, with a spirit of righteous indignation directed at one who had perverted the truths that saves men’s souls, used his miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit to strike Elymas blind for a season that he might be taught not to pervert the truth. Secondly, this miraculous display of indignation against a false prophet proved the validity of Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark’s divine doctrine. Thirdly, this act of indignation proved to Sergius Paulus that the truth was now being taught and that Bar-Jesus was a false prophet to be rejected.
 2. Luke records that the proconsul *“believed”* after seeing Paul’s act of indignation against the sorcerer. Please note that Sergius Paulus’ *“belief”* can be no different than the belief that was produced in all those examples before this. When the gospel message was preached men and women believed and were baptized for the remission of their sins (see Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:48). Clearly Sergius Paulus was baptized for the remission of his sins.

II. The Apostle Paul preaches his first recorded Gospel Sermon (13:13-42):

A. *“Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem”* (13:13).

1. Note the abrupt change in leadership from Barnabas to Paul. Paul has exercised a spirit of righteous indignation against the false prophet at Paphos and has clearly taken over the lead position of the “*company*.”
2. Setting sail from Paphos of Cyprus the three (i.e., Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark) come to Perga of Pamphylia. Luke records the historical event of John Mark “*departing from them*.” Though Luke does



not tell us why John Mark departed it is evident that he lacked the courage to continue due to some unrecorded danger that the company faced. There will be more revealed regarding John’s decision to leave Paul and Barnabas at Acts 15:36ff. Paul and Barnabas have an argument over whether to take John Mark with them on the second tour due to his desertion here.

B. *“But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on”* (13:14-15).

1. Luke does not tell us of any preaching events in Perga, the capital city of Pamphylia. Luke does; however, tell us of Paul and Barnabas preaching in Perga at Acts 14:25.
2. Most support the contention that the synagogue originated in exile and in Babylon. They surmise that it began as spontaneous gatherings of Jews for Sabbaths and festivals, for communal worship and for mutual support. A typical Synagogue worship service on the Sabbath would have been as follows: The Shema would be read in a prayerful fashion (i.e., Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; and Numb. 15:37-41). Prayers would then be offered (i.e., the eighteen benedictions that were recited aloud while the congregation stands). A nineteenth benediction is then recited that warns against apostates. Then there would be a scripture reading from the Torah, a portion of the prophets (Haftarah) and the Psalms. Lastly, a sermon would be delivered for the purpose of educating the Jews in the laws of God (see ISBE, v. 4, pp. 676-684). During these early days of the Synagogue the one preaching the sermon did not have to be recognized as ordained to do so by the local group. Any visitor or member of the synagogue may do so. This is where Paul comes in and preaches his sermon to these men. Paul and Barnabas would have patiently awaited their opportunity to speak and they were eventually given it.

C. *“And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led he them forth out of it. And for about the time of forty years as a nursing-father bare he them in the wilderness”* (13:16-18).

1. The apostle Paul beckoned with his hands to gain the attention of the people assembled at the synagogue. The apostle begins his sermon much in the same way that Stephen did at Acts 7:1ff. Stephen had taken the Sanhedrin council all the way back to Abraham. Paul begins with Israel in Egypt.
2. Paul explains that God delivered Israel from the grip of Egypt with a “*high arm*” (i.e., with great power; see Ex. 6:6; Deut. 5:15).

3. Israel then wandered in the wilderness for “*about the time of forty years*” (see Ex. 16:35; Deut. 8:16). The Jews of the synagogue were certainly following along with what Paul was saying as they too had knowledge of these events.
- D. “*And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years: and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet*” (13:19-20).
1. The four hundred and fifty years would include the time of Israel entering into Canaan, waging war, taking the land and being ruled by judges.
 2. These years were times of God proving Israel with the Canaanites that were not driven out by Joshua.
 3. These seven nations are listed at Deuteronomy 7:1; i.e., The Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.
- E. “*And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years*” (13:21).
1. If we take the Apostle Paul’s account of Israel’s history we find that after Israel came up out of Egypt 530 years would pass before they had their first king, Saul, who reigned for 40 years. Conversely, we find recorded at I Kings 6:1, “*And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of Jehovah.*”
 2. While Paul states that it was 530 years (plus forty more years for the reign of David and three more years on top of that for the third year of Solomon’s reign which brings us to 573 years) the author of I Kings records that the years were 480 years (a difference of nearly 100 years).
 3. While some would discredit the Bible over such discrepancies others look for a logical explanation. It may have been that the author of I Kings excluded the years Israel was ruled by other nations during the days of Judges and Paul did not.
- F. “*And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Savior, Jesus*” (13:22-23).
1. God removed Saul as king over Israel and replaced him with David, “*A man after my heart, who shall do all my will*” (see I Sam. 13:14).
 2. God had “*promised*” that through the seed of David would come Israel’s “*Savior, Jesus*” (see II Sam. 7:12; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5-6 etc.). Jesus was a “*savior*” in that He came to save man from their sins (see Matt. 1:21). The word “*savior*” (*soter*) = “a savior, preserver, deliverer” (Moulton 395). The fulfillment of this “*promise*” is found in Jesus Christ as recorded by Luke at Luke 1:30-33; 2:11.
- G. “*When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not he. But behold, there comes one after me the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose*” (13:24-25).
1. John the baptizer is found preaching repentance of sins and baptism during the days of Christ that he may prepare the way for people to accept Jesus as the Savior (see Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3). John was only doing what “*his course*” in prophecy was to do (see Mal. 4:5-6).
 2. John was asked if he were the Christ and he denied saying, “*there comes one after me the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose*” (see Jn. 1:20).
- H. “*Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain*” (13:26-28).
1. The apostles were given the “*word of this salvation*” to preach to the world. The gospel message was comprised of the message of Christ, his crucifixion, and his resurrection so that man would know about their hope of being forgiven of sins. Note that “*this*” salvation indicates the fact that the subject has already been introduced. Paul had said that by God’s **PROMISE** a savior would be

- brought unto Israel; i.e., Jesus (see Acts 13:23). The savior would grant salvation to man. Keep this thought before you because this is the theme of Paul's sermon.
2. Paul explains that the rulers and those that dwell in Jerusalem fulfilled the words of the prophets regarding Jesus in that he would be killed by lawless hands. These same prophets that foretold of Christ coming and death were read every Sabbath day in the synagogues yet the words fell on dull ears. When Christ came into the world and fulfilled all prophecies regarding the messiah they rejected him and had him killed for no just cause. Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judea, was even perplexed at the blood thirsty cries of "*crucify him*" (see Matt. 27:23; Jn. 19:6).
- I. "*And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raise him from the dead: and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people*" (13:29-31).
1. The "*all things that were written of him*" (i.e., Jesus)" are found throughout the writings of the prophets. Luke had this in mind at Acts 3:22-26. When one examines the life of Christ along side the writings of the prophets it becomes ever so clear that Jesus was indeed the Christ.
 2. Isaiah had given details of Christ's death (see Isa. 53). Once Christ was dead he was raised from the grave and seen for many days as is witnessed by revelation (see I Cor. 15:3ff).
- J. "*And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (13:32-33).*
1. Three connecting statements need to be commented on that we understand the context of this sermon. Paul has revealed that Jesus, the Savior of man, was of the seed of David according to "*promise*" (Acts 13:23). The message of Christ coming into the world to save man from the consequences of their sins is recognized as, "*The word of this salvation*" (Acts 13:26). Paul now states, "*We bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...*" in relation to the resurrection of Christ and (as we shall see) the forgiveness of man's sins. The context of Paul's sermon proves that **God's promise to man is to forgive them of their sins through Jesus Christ** (consider God's promise to Abraham at Gen. 12:1ff as compared to Paul's statement to the Galatians at Gal. 3:10, 16).
 2. Paul tells the Jews in the synagogue of Antioch that this is exactly what the Psalmist had in mind at Psalms 2:7.
- K. "*And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David. Because he saith also in another psalm, Thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he whom God raised up saw no corruption*" (33:34-37).
1. Paul quotes from Isaiah 55:3 and Psalms 16:10 which is a reiteration of the things discussed at Acts 2 regarding David seeing corruption rather than Jesus.
 2. Jesus was raised from the dead never to die again. Apparently some Jews applied the, "*not seeing corruption*" prophecies to David rather than to the Messiah.
- L. "*Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believes is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses*" (13:38-39).
1. Paul now slams the theme of his sermon into the ears of the people in the synagogue. God has, "*according to His promise,*" brought Israel a Savior, Jesus (Acts 13:23). The apostles were preaching, "*The word of this salvation*" (i.e., that God's promise of a Savior has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ) (Acts 13:26). This salvation, through Jesus Christ, is the "*the good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers*" (Acts 13:32). **God's PROMISE finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ which is the "remission of sins."** Peter had spoken of this "*promise*" (i.e., the forgiveness of sins) on the Day of Pentecost and referred to it as the "*gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38-39) (see study # 66).
 2. Note that Paul says, "*and by him every one that BELIEVES is JUSTIFIED...*" To be "*justified*" (*dikaioo*) = "to be held acquitted, to be cleared" (Moulton 102). Paul explains that all mankind is guilty of sin and thereby some are "acquitted or cleared" of this sin through the redemption that is

in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:23-24). Redemption is clearly set forth as the forgiveness of man's sins through the blood of Christ at Ephesians 1:7.

3. Paul states that those who "*believe*" are acquitted of sins (i.e., justified or redeemed). Let us keep the context of the entire book of Acts before us. There have been many examples of men and women who "*believed*" yet their belief alone did not bring them to justification. Believers are people who have heard, believed, repented of sins, confessed Jesus as the Christ, and were baptized for the remission of sins (see Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:48; 13:12) (see study # 71; Bible Belief).
4. Paul states that man could in no way be justified by the law of Moses (see also Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; Heb. 7:18-19; 10:1-4).
- M. "*Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; For I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you*" (13:40-41).
 1. The prophet Habakkuk said this at Hab. 1:5 in relation to the wickedness of Judah. God would rise up the Chaldeans to destroy them because of their disobedience and a lack of concern for the things of God. Though one were to tell Judah, as did the prophets, that they would be horrendously destroyed they would not believe due to the horrid manner in which the event would transpire. The Chaldeans were depicted as "*a bitter and hasty nation... they are terrible and dreadful... more fierce than wolves... they come for violence*" (Hab. 1:6-11).
 2. As Judah's people fell by the gruesome force of Babylon even so those who do not obey the Lord Jesus Christ today and receive the forgiveness of their sins will face the horrid place of hell for eternity. Hell will be a bitter place of terrible dread and violence (see study # 72; Hell).

III. Antioch Responds to Paul's Sermon (13:42-52):

- A. "*And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God*" (13:42-43).
 1. Antioch responds to Paul's sermon by saying that they wanted to hear more of "*these words*" (i.e., the "*word of this salvation*" that pertain to the forgiveness of man's sins / see Acts 13:26, 38).
 2. Paul's gospel sermon was received by both Jews and devout proselytes. The Gentile proselyte was one who had "transferred their allegiance to Yahweh the God of Israel. Thus, *proselytos* in the LXX would sometimes describe a convert to Judaism... The OT clearly states that circumcision is the only required initiation rite for entrance into the covenant community (Gen. 17:9-14; Ex. 12:48)" (ISBE; Vol. 3, pg. 1006 – 1008).
- B. "*And the next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed*" (13:44-45).
 1. The message preached by Paul had a great impact upon the people at the synagogue. Paul has proclaimed that the scriptures regarding Israel's savior has come to pass and that man can now be forgiven of their sins rather than having them remembered (see Acts 13:38-39; Heb. 10:1ff). The message of God fulfilling His promise that He had made through Abraham and David was cause for rejoicing and thereby, "*almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God.*"
 2. Such a great stir caused the Jews to be "*filled with jealousy.*" The response of jealousy illustrates a heart that was more concerned with the things of this world rather than on their salvation (see Gal. 5:20 / A work of the flesh). The emotion of jealousy gave way to the Jews contradicting the words preached and charging the apostle with blaspheme (speaking against God). Their charges against Paul and Barnabas can be summed up as false teaching (see study # 73; Identifying False Teachers).
- C. "*And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (13:46-47).

1. The “*necessary*” reason for the gospel being preached to the Jew first was that he had both the ancestry and history of prophecy regarding God’s promises in his knowledge (see Rom. 1:16; 3:1-2).
 2. The Jews were guilty of “*thrusting away*” (i.e., pushing away) the gospel of their salvation and thereby judged themselves “*unworthy of eternal life.*” Like the Sanhedrin Council of Acts 7:51 they had resisted the words of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Note that the “*Word of God*” is equated to “*salvation*” (Acts 13:26, 47) and salvation to the “*forgiveness of sins*” (Acts 13:38) and the forgiveness of sins to God’s “*promises*” (Acts 13:23, 32) and God’s promises to the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:38-39) (see study # 66).
 4. Seeing that the Jews wanted no part of the gospel message Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles. Jesus told Paul on the road to Damascus that he was to “*bear my name before the Gentiles*” (Acts 9:15). The Jews had no rebuttal to such action. Paul quotes from the OT before the Jews have a chance to claim his error by going to the Gentiles. Paul uses a statement from Isaiah 49:6 which illustrated God’s desire to save the Gentiles.
- D. “*And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*” (13:48).
1. When the Gentiles heard Paul quote from Isaiah 49:6 they rejoiced knowing that they too had the opportunity to be saved from the consequences of their sins.
 2. Luke then records, “*and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*” The Jews of Antioch were not “*ordained unto eternal life*” due to disbelief that Jesus was the Christ. Those “*ordained*” are those who receive “*eternal life.*” Notice that “*belief*” is the connecting factor between being ordained and receiving eternal life. Let us recall that Peter had previously said, “*To him (Jesus) bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believes on him shall receive remission of sins*” (Acts 10:43). One’s faith is thereby connected to the forgiveness of sins and thereby to man’s obedience. One cannot be forgiven of sins unless they obey the command to be baptized (Acts 2:38; 22:16) (see study # 71).
 3. The word “*ordained*” (*tasso*) = “to arrange; to set, appoint, to assign” (Moulton 398). The Nestle Marshal Interlinear Greek English New Testament translates the Greek *tetagmenoi* as “*having been disposed*” (see page 527). The NKJV translates the word, “appointed.” Such words bring up the idea of predestination or foreordination. There are those who hold to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestined individuals being saved (the acronym TULIP). The Bible clearly teaches; however, that those “ordained,” “predestined,” or “foreordained” unto eternal life are those who voluntarily conform their lives to that of Christ in obedience to his will (see Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:3-7; II Thess. 2:13-14) (see study # 74; Predestination).
 4. Paul explains that those ordained unto eternal life “*believed.*” We know from the study above that this indicates their obedience to the gospel’s instructions in that they heard the word, believed it, repented, confessed Jesus as the Christ, were buried with him in baptism and remained faithful (see notes at Acts 13:39) (see study # 71).
- E. “*And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region*” (13:49)
1. The believing Jews and Gentiles spread the gospel news that they had heard by the mouth of Paul and Barnabas “*throughout all the region*” of Galatia.
 2. It is likely that before Paul and Barnabas even came to the other cities of Galatia that the news of Christ fulfilling God’s promise to forgive man of their sins had already reached them.

III. The Rebellious Jews stir up Trouble (13:50-52):

- A. “*But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders*” (13:50).
1. The unbelieving Jews did not remain quiet while the gospel message enjoyed success. These men went to the “*devout women of honorable estate and the chief men of the city*” and stirred them up against Paul and Barnabas. No doubt lies were told about Paul and Barnabas that were received by these women and chiefs of the city.
 2. The wicked tactic worked. Paul and Barnabas were persecuted and cast out of the city. We are not told what type of persecution they suffered. It may be that they were beaten with rods (see II

Cor. 11:25). We do know; however, that Paul was delivered out of every persecution he suffered while in Galatia (see II Tim. 3:11).

B. *“But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit”* (13:51-52).

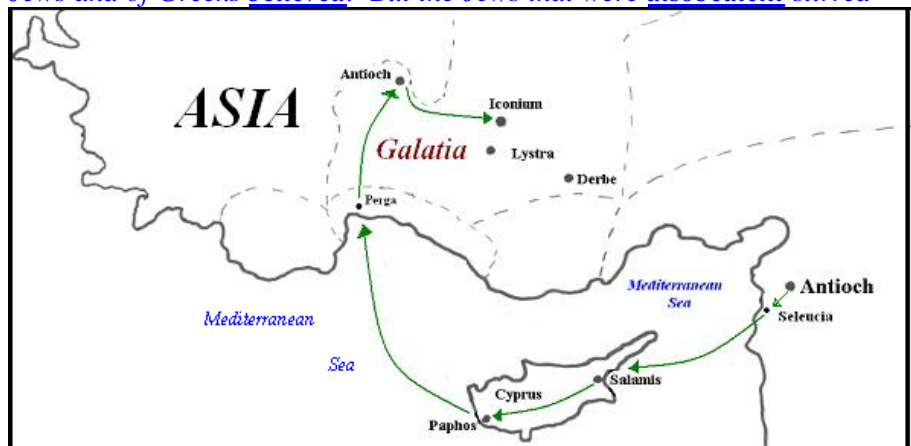
1. When Jesus gave the limited commission to his disciples to go to the household of Jews and preach the gospel, he told them, *“As many as receive you not, when ye depart from that city, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them”* (Lk. 9:5). The dust that remains will be a witness against that city because the gospel of the kingdom of God had been brought to them yet they rejected it.
2. Paul and Barnabas travel to Iconium of Galatia (see map below). Paul and Barnabas apparently had success seeing that *“the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.”* This could mean one of two things or both. First, the disciples at Iconium may have been *“filled with the Holy Spirit”* in that they were able to perform miraculous manifestations of the spirit (i.e., miracles) (see Acts 2:4ff; Lk. 1:67; Eph. 3:1-6). Secondly, we find that people today are commanded to be *“filled with the Holy Spirit”* apart from divine endowments of power in that they are being lead by the Holy Spirit’s teaching (see Rom. 8:9-14; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 5:18-19) (see study # 26).

Chapter 14

I. Paul and Barnabas Travel to Iconium (14:1-7):

A. *“And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks **believed**. But the Jews that were **disobedient** stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren”* (14:1-2).

1. Paul and Barnabas travel to Iconium (see map). The two preach the gospel and great multitudes obeyed.
2. Note that once again we find a connection between *“belief”* and obedience (see Acts 10:43; 13:38-39). The



Jews and Greeks that *“believed”* were thereby those who obeyed the gospel message (i.e., they heard, believed, confessed the name of Christ, repented of sins, were baptized for the remission of sins, and purposed to live a faithful life). Those Jews who did not believe were said to be *“disobedient”* (see study # 71). The conclusion is simple: to believe is to obey God’s commands (see Jn. 3:36; Heb. 11:1ff).

B. *“Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles”* (14:3-4).

1. The time frame of a *“long time”* is not defined. Paul and Barnabas stayed long enough; however, to get the unbelieving people stirred up against them. We are amazed that anyone could dare to resist the words of the Holy Spirit after witnessing the miraculous miracles (i.e., *“signs and wonders”*) done by Paul and Barnabas.
2. Debates have raged over whether or not Barnabas is to be recognized as an apostle of Jesus Christ. While every named apostle in the NT has specific details about their apostleship there is nothing said of Barnabas other than he is referred to one here. There are two possibilities. First, Barnabas

is indeed an apostle. Secondly, Barnabas is not an official apostle but rather one who has been “sent” by the Holy Spirit and saints at Antioch along with the apostle Paul.

- C. *“And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to treat them shamefully and to stone them, they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: and there they preached the gospel”* (14:5-7).
1. See the map above for the geographic location of these Galatian cities. The stir among the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles began to take on mob characteristics. They determined to stone Paul and Barnabas to death; however, the apostles became aware of it and fled for their lives to Lycaonia (a region of Galatia that held the three cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Derbe).
 2. Paul and Barnabas *“preached the gospel”* to the cities of Galatia. Once again, we know exactly what was preached due to the repeated statement found in this book (see Acts 8:25, 40; 13:5 etc.) (see study # 15).
 3. Persecution for *“preaching the gospel”* of Jesus Christ was beginning to be routine for Paul. He had been persecuted at Damascus (Acts 9:23ff), Antioch (Acts 13:50), and now Iconium (Acts 14:5-7) (see study # 75; Persecuted for Preaching Truth). Later, Paul will speak in detail to the Corinthians regarding all the persecution he suffered that the gospel might be preached to the world (Corinthians 11:22ff).

II. Paul and Barnabas Travel to Lystra (see map above) (14:8-18):

- A. *“And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked”* (14:8-10).
1. This miracle has a very similar ring to the one performed by Peter at Acts 3:1ff. The man at Acts 3 was lame in his ankle bones (Acts 3:7). The man that Paul heals is crippled in his feet (both are similar). Both men that were healed had been lame from birth. Here were two men that were well known in their communities as having physical maladies. This is an important fact to note due to the purpose of the miracle being performed (i.e., that those hearing the message would believe that the origin of the apostle’s message was divine / see Mark 16:20).
 2. Some have claimed that in order for a man to be healed he needed to have faith. Their conclusion is then that if they try to heal someone today and it doesn’t work the reason is because the man (or woman) did not have faith to be healed. Note; however, that the man Peter healed had no faith to be healed. He wanted money not a healing (see study # 21; Do Miracles Exist Today?).
- B. *“And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter (or Zeus) and Paul, Mercury (or Hermes), because he was the chief speaker”* (14:11-12).
1. The Lycaonians were pagan idolaters who believed in the Greek mythological gods. When they saw Paul miraculously heal the lame man their conclusion was that, *“The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.”*
 2. Due to Paul being the *“chief speaker”* they assigned to him the god Mercury (or Hermes). Hermes was “A Greek god, son of Zeus and Maia, called ‘Mercury’ by the Romans. In Greek mythology he functioned primarily as the attendant, herald, and interpreter of the gods. He was the god who conducted the souls of the dead to the underworld... He was popular as the patron of orators and the protector of travelers” (ISBE v. 2, 687).
 3. Barnabas was assigned by the Lycaonians as Zeus. Zeus was “One of the principal deities in the Greco-Roman pantheon. To the Romans he was known as Jovis or Jupiter. Zeus was originally associated with the sky and atmospheric phenomena. He was not the ancestor of gods or people, but as the supreme deity, ruler of gods and humanity, he functioned among the Greeks as benefactor, especially to those engaged in agricultural pursuits” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 1194).
- C. *“And the priest of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you **good tidings**, that ye*

should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is:” (14:13-15).

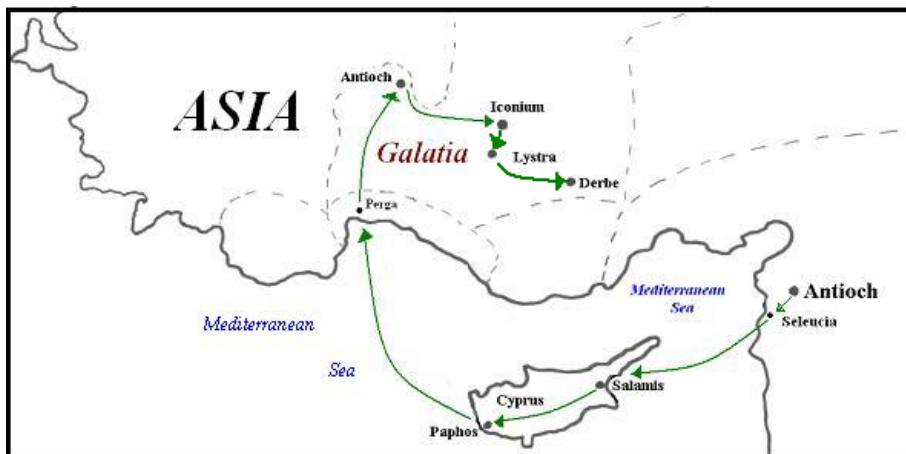
1. Within this pagan society in Galatia the Greek gods had temples just as Jehovah God’s temple rest in Jerusalem. These temples employed priests to offer sacrifices to appease the pagan gods. Seeing that the people of Lystra believed Paul to be Mercury and Barnabas to be Zeus they determined to make sacrifices unto them immediately. The priests of Zeus brought oxen and garlands to the gates of the city that they may make a blood sacrifice to him.
 2. Paul and Barnabas witness the pagan carnival atmosphere and cry out aloud as they rent their garments in an outward show of great grief over the events unfolding. Paul and Barnabas proclaim to the idolaters that they are not gods but rather men of like passions with all the people of Lystra.
 3. While they had the mobs attention Paul takes the opportunity to preach the gospel message. Paul preaches the “*good tidings*” (note that this exact phrase is mentioned at Acts 13:32 and must thereby indicate the message of God’s promise to forgive man of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ).
 4. Paul, with a spirit of boldness, tells the idolaters that their current practice of worshiping idols is a vain (worthless) endeavor and that they need to “*turn from these vain things unto a living God.*” The idols of Zeus and Mercury that those of Lystra worshipped were dead (i.e., never were alive / see I Cor. 8:4; Isa. 37:19; 44:10-17; Hab. 2:18-19). God; however, is alive. God has made the very heavens, earth, and sea with its fishes (all objects of the pagan people’s worship).
- D. “*who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them*” (14:16-18).
1. To “*suffer*” (*eao*) = “to allow, permit, suffer to be done” (Moulton 110). God permitted all nations (primarily Gentile people) to conduct themselves as they saw fit rather than delivering to them divine revelation. This being the case, the Gentiles were still without excuse for not obeying His will because God gave them rains, fruitful seasons, food, and gladness of heart. Paul is convicting these Gentiles of the sin of idolatry. They should have known better than to make up gods.
 2. The apostle Paul made the same argument to the Romans at Romans 1:19-20. Man ought to look to creation and determine that God is (see Ps. 19:1ff) (see study # 76; Evidences of God). Though the evidences of God’s omnipotence were all about them they appear to plug their ears and purpose to offer sacrifices to them.
 3. Not much is said about the success Paul and Barnabas had in Lystra. The inference of 14:22 tells us that a church was established there with faithful brethren. II Tim. 1:5 gives names of some of these disciples (Lois and her daughter Eunice with Timothy her son: Cf. Acts 16:1-2).

III. Paul is persecuted at Lystra and Iconium while edifying the Saints (14:19-22):

- A. “*But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead*” (14:19).
1. Paul is beginning to see what Jesus meant when he said of him, “*I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake*” (Acts 9:16). Paul had been persecuted at Damascus (Acts 9:23ff), Antioch (Acts 13:50), Iconium (Acts 14:5-7), and now Lystra (Acts 14:19) (see study # 75).
 2. The persecuting unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium are so concerned about Paul’s doctrine that they make the trip to Lystra, stir up the multitudes against Paul, and then stone him to what they believe to be his death. Apparently Paul was knocked completely unconscious by the rocks and taken for dead.

B. *“But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe”* (14:20).

1. See map to the right for the location of Derbe.
2. Paul was a man driven by a purpose to preach and save men’s souls. When he came to himself he just went to the next city to preach.



C. *“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God”* (14:21-22).

1. The result of preaching the gospel to those of Derbe was that they made many disciples (i.e., people were baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins [we know that this is the case because of the multitude of examples that have preceded this – nothing has changed with the teachings nor its demands upon man]).
2. It would take a brave and bold man to go back to the cities that had persecuted him even to the point of death. Paul was determined to further establish these churches in truth. He and Barnabas travel back through Galatia to teach them more of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Once again we find edification taking place among the saints. Paul preaches to the saints *“confirming”* their souls in truth. The word *“confirm”* (*episterizo*) = “to cause to rest or lean on, to settle upon; met. To confirm, strengthen, establish” (Moulton 160). Paul and Barnabas were teaching the saints to lean upon the words of God alone. His objective was to strengthen and establish them in the truth (see study # 65).
 - b. The strength and establishment of their faith would be realized as they *“continued in the faith.”* Preaching the gospel thereby included the idea of being faithful (see study # 53).
3. Paul and Barnabas explained to the saints of Galatia that it would be through *“many tribulations that they enter into the kingdom of God.”* As Paul had already experienced persecution it is very likely that the saints of Galatia were also being persecuted due to their faith. Paul comforts the brethren by telling them that said persecutions are necessary that we may enter into the kingdom of God (i.e., heaven rather than church in this context due to the fact that they were already added to the kingdom of God [i.e., church] through baptism). Paul would latter tell the Thessalonians that were being persecuted because of their faith that God had *“appointed”* them this suffering (I Thess. 3:3). When God’s people expose man’s errors he is often persecuted (Jn. 7:7). The inference is clear. God commands that His saints preach the gospel and that gospel will cut straight through a man’s heart to expose his sin. Many will not like this type of preaching and thereby persecute the speaker (see study # 77; Preachers and Preaching).

IV. Paul establishes an eldership in the Galatian cities and returns Home (14:23-28):

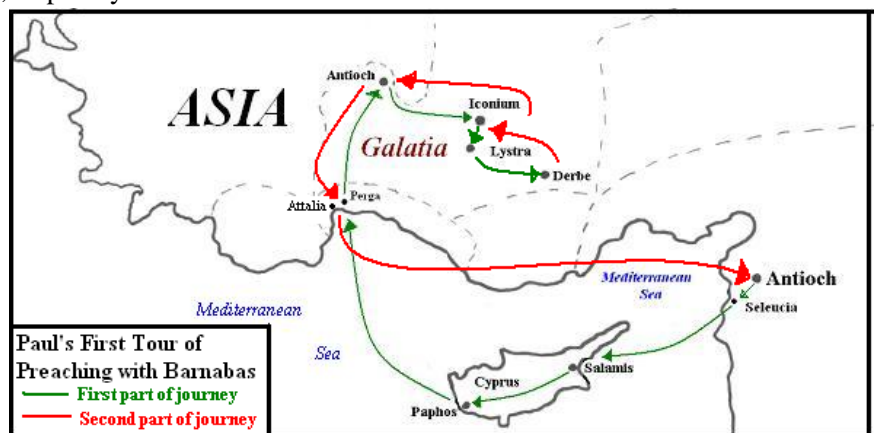
A. *“And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed”* (14:23).

1. Not only had Paul and Barnabas gone back through the Galatian cities to edify the saints and encourage them to remain faithful to the Lord but they also established an eldership in these fledgling churches. Note that it was the apostles who *“appointed”* (“ordained” see KJV) men elders. The word *“appointed”* (*cheirotoneo*) = “to stretch out the hand; to constitute by voting; to appoint, constitute” (Moulton 436). Liddell and Scott define the word as, “to stretch out the hand, for the purpose of voting... to vote for, elect, properly by show of hands... to be elected” (LS 885). The apostle Paul would latter tell Titus, *“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set*

in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge;” (Titus 1:5). The English word “*appoint*” is the Greek “*kathistemi*” defined as, “to place, set, constitute, appoint” (Moulton 207). Two equivalence in the above two Greek words are “constitute” (i.e., to appoint to an office)” and “appoint.” The examples in the NT of a church obtaining elders where no previous elders existed illustrate that either the apostles or a preacher, such as Titus, appointed these men to serve in this office. The appointment was not based upon a popular vote but rather the vote put forth for an individual who met the qualifications outlined in I Timothy 3:1ff and Titus 1:5ff. (see study # 78; Electing Elders).

2. Let us also note that it was **not only one man** but a **plurality of men** who would serve in this office. Consider Friberg’s Analytical Greek New Testament parsing of the Greek word for “*elders*” (i.e., AP-AM-P = Adjective / Pronominal – Accusative / Masculine – Plural). The elders were to be male and there was a plurality of them.
3. Note thirdly that there were to be elders “*in every church.*” The NT is clear regarding the authoritative bounds of an elder. Each church’s elders were to oversee that local church only (see I Pet. 5:1-3). The idea of a diocese (the district or churches under the jurisdiction of a bishop; bishopric / AHD 398) is foreign to the NT.
4. Lastly, let us identify the “*elder*” (Greek – *presbuteros*) = “an elder or presbyter of the Christian church” (Moulton 340). Liddell and Scott define the word as, “elders, always implying dignity, chiefs, princes... the wise council of age... a chief... an elder of the church, presbyter” (LS 668). The English word “presbyter” = “in the early Christian church, an elder of the congregation” (AHD 979). The equivalence of the word “elder” and “presbyter” is seen when comparing I Tim. 3:1ff and Titus 1:5. The comparison is further depicted in Acts 20:17, 28 when the elders are referred to as both bishops and presbyters. Each of these terms illustrate a work that these men have been ordained to do (i.e., the word “*elder*” illustrates the man’s age, bishop (superintendent), and pastor (nourish / feed / and shepherd) (see study # 69).
5. These facts indicate that the early church had organization on a local level only. The church had Elders (men of age that superintended the flock as a shepherd), deacons (men whose duty it was to take care of the widows and needy of the congregation), evangelists (men who publicly edified the saints and preached to the lost) and members who placed themselves under the care of the eldership in hope of making it to heaven (see Phil. 1:1) (see study # 79; Church Organization).
6. To “*commend*” (*paratithemi*) these men to the Lord = “to set before, commit to the charge of, entrust, a thing committed to one’s charge” (Moulton 306). Paul and Barnabas set before the Lord and all the brethren these ordained men who now had been granted by divine appointment the office of Bishop, elder, or presbyter.

B. “*And they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia; and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church*



together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples” (14:24-28).

1. After establishing churches in Galatia, going back to these churches edifying them, and appointing elders in every church to shepherd the flock among them the apostles return home (see map).

2. Once in Antioch of Syria the Apostles gather the church together and rehearse all that had transpired on their Cyprus and Galatian journey. It is thought that the entire journey took three years (i.e., from AD 45 – 48). They remain in Antioch for, “*no little time.*”

Chapter 15

Prelude to Study:

A Time line of current events:

1. Saul sees the Lord on the road to Damascus (37 AD) (Acts 9:3).
2. Ananias baptized Saul into Christ in Damascus (Acts 9:18).
3. Saul began immediately to “*proclaim Jesus as the Son of God*” in the area synagogues (Acts 9:20).
4. Saul remained in the region of Damascus preaching for three years without the aid of other apostles (Gal. 1:16-18) (37 – 40 AD).
5. Paul traveled to Jerusalem to visit Peter after spending three years preaching in Arabia and Damascus. While in Jerusalem, Paul met James (the Lord’s brother). At no time did any apostle take Paul aside and teach him what to do and say in regards to the gospel (Gal. 1:18-20).
6. From Jerusalem, Paul traveled into Syria and Cilicia preaching the gospel (Gal. 1:21-22). Apparently six years passed between Paul’s first visit to Jerusalem as an apostle and the first tour of preaching.
 - a. Barnabas and Paul took funds to needy saints in Judea (Acts 11:27ff).
 - b. Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark took first tour of preaching (Acts 13:4 – 14:28) (AD 46 – 49).
 - c. Paul spent 1½ years in Antioch before traveling down to Jerusalem to participate in the Jerusalem conference.

Circumstances that led to the writing of the Galatian Epistle:

The apostle Paul had preached in Galatia and established churches in four cities during the years of AD 45 – 48. Not long after these churches were established, Judaizing Christians began scattering through the area with their erroneous teachings. They denied Paul’s apostleship and thereby discounted his teaching in the hearing of the Galatian brethren. The consequence of their work was so widespread that it prompted a conference in Jerusalem that was attended by the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1ff). One of the primary functions of the meeting was to determine whether Paul’s teachings were inspired and in agreement with the other apostles (cf. Gal. 2:7ff). These teachers were going about saying that Christians needed to keep the Mosaic Law (circumcision) and the Law of Christ together to be saved (cf. Acts 15:5). Paul was fearful that the Galatians were going to completely turn their back to truth and lose their souls due to these men’s work (Gal. 4:11). At one time the Galatians considered themselves blessed to have heard Paul’s message of salvation (Gal. 4:15), yet after the Judaizers got through with them, they considered Paul their enemy (Gal. 4:16). Paul said, ‘*you were running so well*’ (what happened?) (Gal. 5:7). Paul had preached the gospel, and they received the message by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2). Consequently, the Galatians were baptized for the remission of their sins (Gal. 3:26). Yet now the Galatians were second guessing Paul because of the terrible things they were hearing about him. Paul wasted no time in writing the Galatians this epistle to counter the Judaizer’s teaching.

The Judaizers had apparently said many derogatory things about Paul, his teaching, and his apostleship. Some were saying that Paul preached to gain the “*favor of men*” (Gal. 1:10). Some were saying that he “*lied*” about being an apostle (Gal. 1:20). Many were challenging his teaching as not being inspired. They said that Paul’s teaching was different than what the other apostles were teaching (Gal. 2:2-10). Still some charged Paul with being inconsistent with his teaching on circumcision (cf. Gal. 5:11). These Judaizers were motivated to say bad things about Paul and teach another gospel because they did not want to be “*persecuted*” and neither did they want to see others persecuted by the Jews (Gal. 6:12). Therefore, they sought to appease the Jews by teaching the Mosaic Law to Christians and they sought to appease the Christians by exhibiting faith in Jesus (cf. Acts 15:5; Gal. 6:12). They sought peace at the cost of men’s souls. Such tolerance would be termed in our day, “Unity in Diversity of Beliefs” (see study # 20; Unity in Diversity). The overall message of the Judaizers to other Christians was that the Mosaic

Law must be kept (Acts 15:5), all must be circumcised (Gal. 6:13), and that all must keep the set Mosaic feasts and special days of worship (Gal. 4:10). Though these teachers taught these things, they did not do so themselves (Gal. 6:13). The Judaizer's objective in life was to obtain peace with all men whereas Paul's objective was justification through faith in Jesus Christ no matter the cost (Gal. 3:8-9).

Apparently the Galatians had given these false teachers the right hand of fellowship and an ear to their doctrines (Gal. 1:6; 3:1; 5:2). The consequence of said acceptance was that they were severed from Christ and fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). Instead of trying to protect these false teachers, Paul labeled them as "*false brethren*" and spoke of the damage they were causing (Gal. 2:4). Paul said some were "*troubling*" (causing confusion) among the Galatians with a "*perverted gospel*" (a changed doctrine) (Gal. 1:6-7). These teachers had "*bewitched*" the Galatians (Gal. 3:1). The false teachers were "*zealously seeking you* (the Galatians) *in no good way*" (Gal. 4:17). These teachers "*hindered,*" "*troubled,*" and "*unsettled*" the Galatians by "*persuading*" them with false doctrines (Gal. 5:7-12). Paul would in no way spare a false teacher because men's souls were at stake (see study # 70).

Paul's remedy to the situation is given throughout the book. First, the Galatians were to test the doctrines of men to see whether they stood the test of the inspired revelation of God (Gal. 1:8-9). For an effective test to be run, the brethren needed to understand the difference between divine revelation and human reason. Paul lay claims to teaching divine revelation and then proved this by looking to his apostleship (Gal. 1:11-12). The Jerusalem conference was devastating to the false teachers of Galatia because the results unequivocally marked Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ who preached truth (cf. Gal. 2:2, 9 compared to Acts 15:24-27). Secondly, the Galatians were admonished to cast out those who sought them in no good way with their teaching (Gal. 4:17, 30) because such men were accursed (Gal. 1:6). Finally, Paul suggested to the Galatians that they crucify the flesh (Gal. 6:14) and walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Paul spent a considerable amount of space in his Galatian epistle explaining the fatal uselessness of attempting to follow any one part of the Mosaic Law with the expectation of getting one closer to God. To follow any part of the Mosaic Law is to be under a curse because no man could keep it perfectly, and when one failed, there was no remedy for the sin (Gal. 3:10). To follow the Mosaic Law is to be kept in ward as a prisoner (Gal. 3:22; 4:3). When one obeys the gospel, he is set free from the bondage of sin (Gal. 4:7). Paul explained to the Galatians that any system that did not represent Christ only held one in bondage to sin because the forgiveness of sins come through Christ alone. Many in the religious world today are seeking their justification by means other than what Christ words reveal and are consequently held hostage to that system (whether it be Baptist faith, Methodist faith, Catholic faith, etc.).

The lesson that you and I need to learn from the book of Galatians and the Jerusalem Conference is that we must seek our salvation in the teachings of Christ alone. If someone brings another teaching, we should test it rather than receiving the man because he seems good. If the doctrines these men present to us do not represent Christ teaching we ought to expose it and cast it away from us. Christians are always to live by the Spirit (God's instructions) rather than living by the flesh (man's ideas).

I. Converted Pharisees teach erring Doctrine in Jerusalem (15:1-5):

- A. "*And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved*" (15:1).
1. The "*certain men*" were obviously disciples of the believing Pharisees mentioned at Acts 15:5. These Christians were teaching error. Later in Acts 15 we find that these disciples of the believing Pharisees came from the church in Jerusalem claiming to be teaching this doctrine in accordance to the Apostles and elders of Jerusalem (see Acts 15:24). These men apparently lied about where they received their teaching and they are lying regarding the teaching itself.
 2. Why would they say, "*Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved?*" These men did not hear such doctrine from Christ nor the apostles. They obviously heard it from the unbelieving Jews. The Apostle Paul tells us, through the book of Galatians, that the motivation for said error was persecution (Gal. 6:12-13). No one wanted to be persecuted. To avoid persecution they accepted the doctrines of the Jews while trying to hold on to the teachings of Christ and that never ever works.
 3. These false teachers had pressed their doctrines upon the brethren in Antioch which included Titus (an uncircumcised Gentile convert). Paul tells the Galatians that Titus did not give in to this false doctrine and neither did Paul or any of the faithful brethren even for a moment (see Gal. 2:3-4).

- B. *“And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question”* (15:2).
1. Note that men came to Antioch and *“taught the brethren”* an erring doctrine and Paul and Barnabas did not sit by idly and allow the gospel of Jesus Christ to be perverted and men’s souls to lost (see Gal. 1:7) (see study # 70).
 2. Paul and Barnabas had no small *“dissension”* with these erring brethren and they questioned them over their doctrine. The word *“dissension”* (*stasis*) = “dispute” (Moulton 203). The argument between Paul, Barnabas and those teaching the error came to be so intense that church in Antioch decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to confer with the *“apostles and elders about this question.”*
 3. The *“certain other of them”* that traveled along are not mentioned; however, we know from Galatians 2 that Titus was with them (see Gal. 2:1).
- C. *“They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren”* (15:3).
1. Paul, Barnabas, and Titus travel south to Jerusalem fourteen years after Paul had been converted (considered *“up”* only because of elevation) (Gal. 2:1).
 2. The Christians from Antioch of Syria travel south through Phoenicia and Samaria telling everyone about the *“conversion of the Gentiles.”* The Gentiles had been converted from paganism to Christianity and such news was cause of *“great joy unto all the brethren.”* No one seemed to be annoyed with the addition of the Gentiles (these were primarily Gentile areas).
- D. *“And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the Law of Moses”* (15:4-5).
1. Upon arrival in Jerusalem the brethren go directly to the *“church”* (brethren who had been called out of the world to serve God through the obedience of faith). Once with the brethren Paul and Barnabas tell the members of the Lord’s church, including the Apostles and elders, all that had transpired with their journey to Galatia and how that many Gentiles were converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 2. Upon hearing that Gentiles obeyed the gospel the *“believing Pharisees”* stand up and say, *“It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the Law of Moses.”* Let us notice a few things about these Pharisees:
 - a. The Pharisees were considered lawyers of the Mosaic Law. Their sect among the Jews was one of the strictest and known for their adherence and knowledge of the Law.
 - b. Notice; however, that the Pharisees under consideration were with the *“church”* hearing Paul and Barnabas speak about their Galatian tour. Secondly, Luke records that these Pharisees *“believed.”* Being gathered with the church and identified as believers is proof that these Pharisees had obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ. Time and time again we have seen that this is the case with those who are labeled as *“believers”* (see Acts 13:39 etc.). At Acts 10:45; 11:2, 17-18 we find *“those of the circumcision that believed.”* Here were Jews who believed that all must be circumcised to be saved and had a difficult time, at the first, accepting the Gentiles yet eventually did at the teaching of Peter.
 3. The erring doctrine and point of contention is now clearly spelled out; i.e., *“It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the Law of Moses.”*

II. The Debate over the Gentile’s circumcision and obedience to the Law of Moses (15:6-11):

- A. *“And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter”* (15:6).
1. The Apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem meet with Paul and Barnabas and the erring Pharisees to discuss this matter. This was not a gathering to initiate or produce doctrine but rather a meeting that would confirm the authorized will of God in the matter.
 2. Let us recall that Paul was not very well known among the Apostles at this time. He had done his work in Damascus, Arabia, Syria, Cilicia, Cyprus, and Galatia. These Jerusalem Apostles and

elders had to *“learn”* of Paul’s Apostleship and of his God ordained work among the Gentiles (see Gal. 2:6-10). Once they learned of Paul’s Apostleship and work they gave him the *“right hand of fellowship”* (Gal. 2:9). Two things would thereby be accomplished at the Jerusalem conference. First, the erring doctrine proceeding from the believing Pharisees was renounced and secondly Paul is better acquainted with the other Apostles of Jesus Christ.

- B. *“And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should **hear** the word of the gospel, **and believe**. And God, who knows the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith”* (15:7-9).
1. The *“much questioning”* appears to be quibbling between those of the circumcision (i.e., believing Pharisees and their adherents) and Paul and Barnabas.
 2. Peter, acting as somewhat of a mediator, stands before the assembled group and speaks. Peter reminds those of the circumcision who believed (i.e., Jewish Christians) that he had previously revealed to them the fact that the Gentiles were to hear the gospel, receive it, and believe it. Peter no doubt speaks of his experience with Cornelius and his Gentile household (Acts 10:1 – 11:18). These Gentiles received the Holy Spirit as did the Jews because God makes *“no distinction between us and them.”* As God *“cleansed their hearts by faith”* he cleans all men’s hearts by faith. God is no respecter of persons. Any man or woman that hears, believes, repents, confesses the name of Christ, is baptized for the remission of their sins and purposes to live a faithful life is accepted by God.
- C. *“Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”* (15:10)
1. Peter accuses the believing Pharisees of making trial of God in that the Lord had already showed His divine mercy upon the Gentiles of Cornelius’ house. To place stipulations (the *“yoke”*) upon the Gentile’s conversion that God had not commanded was to try the Lord (see study # 80; Putting God to the Test). These Pharisees should have been satisfied with God’s original plan to save the Gentiles by faith as the Jews. They; however, added to God’s commands and thereby found themselves in trouble. So many today want to make additions to God’s plan of salvation that are not there. Modern day Pharisees would indeed pervert the gospel and such cannot be permitted by the faithful of God (see study # 25).
 2. Paul would later tell the Galatians who had taken this erring doctrine hook, line, and sinker that if they were going to keep one part of the Mosaic Law (i.e., circumcision) then they had to keep all of it (which was impossible) (see Gal. 3:10; 5:2-4).
- D. *“But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they”* (15:11).
1. Salvation did not occur through circumcision and keeping of the Mosaic Law but through the *“grace of the Lord Jesus.”* God does not distinguish between Jew and Gentile but rather through faith or non-faith (see Gal. 3:27-28).
 2. These Judaizing Christians needed further edification on this subject as Peter so skillfully does. The very fact that we are having to refer to these believing Jews as “those of the circumcision, believing Pharisees, or Judaizing Christians” illustrates a segregation problem that they would have to overcome.
 3. There are two important things to note at this verse:
 - a. First, note that Peter connects being *“saved”* to God’s *“grace.”* Peter is contrasting *“grace”* with the Mosaic Law system of circumcision and perfect law keeping. Later the Apostle Paul will write to the Ephesians saying, *“for by grace have ye been saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God”* (Eph. 2:8). Paul connects *“grace”* to being *“saved”* and that through *“faith.”* Please do note that we can no more say that a man is “saved” by simple *“belief”* than we can to say that one is simply *“saved”* by God’s *“grace”* alone (see study # 64). We must understand what grace, faith, and salvation is about. The three are used interchangeably throughout the NT. At Romans 5 Paul brings in the word *“justification”* to the equation. At Ephesians 1:7 Paul brings in the idea of *“redemption”* into the salvation

equation as he equates it to the forgiveness of sins and God's rich grace. While all of these terms have their specific definition we find that they are all connected to the forgiveness of sins. **When one is saved by God's grace through the redemption of Christ blood they have justification which is the forgiveness of their sins!**

- b. Secondly, let us note that Peter is comparing being saved by grace (i.e., receiving the forgiveness of sins) with "*belief*" (see Acts 15:5, 11 and all the "*believe*" passages). When the book of Acts gives the account of a person or group of people hearing the gospel and then remarking that they "believed" it necessarily infers that they not only heard and believed but that they acted in obedience (see study # 71). Their obedience included being baptized for the remission of sins and purposing to live faithfully.

E. "*And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them*" (15:12).

1. The multitude's silence was likely due to the fact that Peter's words had condemned their teaching as erroneous. The Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit and salvation just as the Jews had. There were witnesses to this when Peter preached to Cornelius' household. When Cornelius' household was saved there was nothing said by Peter about these Gentiles being circumcised and keeping the Mosaic Law. The Apostles had not taught this change of plan but the Judaizing Christians had. Seeing this they held their peace.
2. Furthermore, Paul adds more information that proves damaging to the Judaizer's teaching regarding the Gentiles having to be circumcised and keep Mosaic Law to be saved. Paul tells the multitudes that while in Galatia there were Gentiles who had obeyed the gospel that were able to perform signs and wonders by the power of God. How could they do this if they had not been circumcised and God held it against them? The truth on this matter had already been established before the Jerusalem conference. These men were only debating what God had previously revealed through the Holy Spirit.

I. **James Responds to Paul and Peter's Sermon on the Gentiles' Salvation (15:13-29):**

A. "*And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, Saith the Lord, who makes these things known from of old*" (15:13-18).

1. The James under consideration is an elder in the church and author of the book of James (not the Apostle James... the Apostle James has already been killed by Herod / See Acts 12:1ff).
2. James reasons with the multitudes that believed the Gentiles had to be circumcised and that they must keep Mosaic Law in order to be saved. James remarks that Peter's words regarding the Gentile's salvation was even prophesied to take place.
3. James then quotes from Amos 9:11-12 to prove his point. There are three things that have now condemned the teaching of the Judaizers as false:
 - a. The fact that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit and salvation as recorded at Acts 10 – 11 without circumcision.
 - b. The fact that Paul had witnessed the Gentile's salvation and their ability to perform signs and wonders through the power of God.
 - c. Lastly, James tells us that even the OT prophets foretold of the Gentiles salvation under the Lord's new covenant.

B. "*Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood*" (15:19-20).

1. Paul told the Galatians that the false teachers had "*troubled*" them (see Gal. 1:7; 5:12; 6:17). James' judgment is that no Christian should "*trouble*" the Gentiles over these matters. The Gentiles did; however, need additional instructions regarding lawful living. Though they were at liberty not to keep the Mosaic Law they could not completely disregard its instructions revolving around the subject of idolatry. Many Gentile pagans worshipped other deities by sacrificing to

- them, eating and drinking blood, and even committing acts of fornication in the name of worship. James admonishes these Gentile Christians to abstain from these events.
2. We know; however, that James was not condemning the consumption of meats sacrificed to idols but rather the partaking of the blood in a participatory way in idol worship (see I Cor. 8:8; 10:20-26). No blood was to be partaken by a man of God period (Lev. 17:14).
- C. *“For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath”* (15:21).
1. While the Mosaic Laws regarding circumcision and sacrifices had been abrogated there were things that this first covenant taught that needed to be held on to; i.e., abstaining from idolatry, blood, and fornication. The Mosaic Law had its preachers who taught God’s laws that were delivered by Moses. These laws were read every Sabbath in the hearing of the people. These laws were good and many were to be carried over to the New Covenant through Jesus Christ.
 2. The point being that just because the apostles and elders in Jerusalem have said by God’s divine will that the Gentiles do not have to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law that the Jews can now go living completely separated from the principles of the Mosaic Laws (see study # 81; The Function of the Mosaic Law in the New Testament Church).
- D. *“Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:”* (15:22).
1. The apostles, elders, and whole church determined to send a letter to the churches of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia regarding the matter of the Gentiles being forced to keep the Mosaic Law and to be circumcised.
 2. This letter would go by the hands of Paul, Barnabas along with Judas and Silas. These two men were *“chief men among the brethren.”* The word *“chief”* (*hegeomai*) = “to lead... to take the lead... rule, to be chief... a chief officer in the church; see Heb. 13:7, 17, 24” (Moulton 184). It may very well be that Judas and Silas were elders in the church of Jerusalem.
- E. *“and they wrote thus by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (15:23-26).
1. The letter from the apostles and elders of Jerusalem is addressed to the Gentile Christians dwelling in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.
 2. The letter states that they had *“heard”* that some of their own brethren from Jerusalem have traveled to your cities and *“troubled you with words.”* No doubt that when Paul wrote that these false teachers had *“troubled”* the Galatians he had the words of these men in mind (see Gal. 1:7; 5:12; 6:17).
 3. The false teaching that emanated from Jerusalem not only *“troubled”* the Gentile brethren but men’s souls were being *“subverted.”* The word *“subverted”* (*anaskeuazo*) = “to lay waste by carrying off or destroying every thing; met. To unsettle, pervert, subvert” (Moulton 25) (see study # 82; The Effects of False Teaching).
 4. The false teaching had originated in Jerusalem within the church that assembled there. James forthrightly proclaims that these erring doctrines were not taught here and neither did they agree to them. With such words the brethren in Jerusalem determined to send these words to the church up north.
 5. Note that the letter recognizes the faithful work of Paul and Barnabas who had *“hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* While Paul and Barnabas preached the authorized words of Christ they were persecuted and men even sought to end their lives in Galatia.
- F. *“We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from*

things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well” (15:27-29).

1. Not only should the letter solve the issue but Judas and Silas will bring this message by word of mouth.
2. Note that there is further proof that the Apostles, elders, and church members did not meet to decide matters of faith but rather it was the “*Holy Spirit*” involved in these discussions. Inspired men were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak only words acceptable and authorized by the Lord.

III. **The trip back to Antioch with the written and verbal confirmation from the Holy Spirit that the false teachers were Wrong (15:30-35):**

A. *“So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation” (15:30-31).*

1. The men travel back to the north with the epistle written by the Apostles and elders of Jerusalem. Once they arrive at Antioch of Syria they gather all the brethren together and read the letter.
2. The content of the letter; i.e., Gentiles do not have to be circumcised and keep Mosaic Law with exception to things like fornication, idolatry, etc., caused the brethren to “*rejoice for the consolation.*” The word “*consolation*” (*paraklesis*) = “instruction” (Moulton 303).

B. *“And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. And after they had spent some time there, they were dismissed in peace from the brethren unto those that had sent them forth. vs. 34 (But it seemed good unto Silas to abide there). But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also” (15:32-35).*

1. Not only were Judas and Silas’ chief men of the church in Jerusalem but they were also “*prophets.*” Notice that the exhortation of Judas and Silas was “*confirmed*” by them. In what way was their words confirmed? To this point of the study we have discovered that one of the purposes of performing miracles was to confirm the words as being of a divine origin (see Mark 16:20).
2. After much teaching had occurred Judas and others that had come to Antioch decide to return home. Silas; however, remains in Antioch (verse 34 is not in the ASV due to its questionable place in various manuscripts). Paul and Barnabas continue to edify the brethren through preaching the word. To “*preach*” (*euaggelizo*) = “to announce good tidings of... to address with Gospel teaching” (Moulton 172).

IV. **The Second Tour of Preaching (15:36-41) {50 – 53AD}:**

Note on Date: We have determined that the dates for the first tour of preaching must have been around 44 to 48 AD. The events of the “*Jerusalem Conference*” (Acts 15:1ff) possibly take up two years bringing us to the year 50 AD. Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus (known as Claudius at Acts 11:27-28 and 18:2) reigned as Roman Emperor from AD 41 to AD 54. The decree given at Acts 18:2 by Claudius is supposed to have taken place during the 51 AD (see notes at that text). The beginning date of Paul taking this second tour must be somewhat close to this 51 AD mark due to the fact that there is no mention of lengthy stays anywhere. The statement of Acts 18:2 is that Aquila and Priscilla had “*lately*” come to Corinth due to Claudius’ decree. We will, for the sake of giving dates, place the beginning of this second tour at 50 AD and close it at approximately 53 AD due to the statements of Paul remaining in Corinth for one and a half years after Claudius’ decree (see Acts 18:11). Secondly, it is a recorded fact that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia during the year 52 AD (see Acts 18:12). Thirdly, if Paul stayed in Achaia for “*many days*” (Acts 18:18) after the events of Acts 18:12 and then traveled to Asia and then to Judea by way of Caesarea and Jerusalem it could have very well taken him another six months to reach Antioch of Syria which would no doubt place us at 53 AD.

A. *“And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare. And Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work” (15:36-38).*

1. Paul, thinking about the brethren in Galatia, was determined to travel back to those cities to “*see how they fare.*” Paul may have feared that the false teaching that had reached Cilicia and Syria may

have already reached the brethren of Galatia. This series of verses illustrate Paul's intense desire to help others along their walk to heaven.

2. There was a snag to overcome before Paul and Barnabas could take the trip. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them again and Paul did not because he had withdrew himself from them at Pamphylia (see Acts 13:13). Barnabas was willing to give John Mark another chance at proving himself (likely because he was John Mark's cousin – see Col. 4:10) yet Paul was not.
- B. *“And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus: but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches”* (15:39-41).
1. Paul and Barnabas' disagreement came to a *“sharp contention”* about the matter of taking Mark with them. The words *“sharp contention”* is actually one word in the Greek; i.e., (*paroxusmos*): “Irritation” (Thayer 490). “Irritation, exasperation, Dem., N.T.: a provoking” (LS 610). “A sharp fit of anger, sharp contention, angry dispute” (Moulton 310). “Irritation, sharp disagreement” (AG 629). The text reads as if Paul and Barnabas left each other being exasperated with each other. Eventually Barnabas and Mark regain Paul's confidence (see I Cor. 9:6; Col. 4:10-11; II Tim. 4:11).
 2. Barnabas took Mark and traveled to Cyprus and Paul took Silas and traveled north to Syria and Cilicia to *“confirm the churches”* (i.e., to establish them in truth) (see study # 65).
 3. Luke tells us that the church in Antioch *“commended”* Paul and Silas on their way. To be *“commended”* = “to commit or commend” (Thayer 481; Moulton 302). “To give or hand over” (LS 595). Apparently the church in Antioch handed over or committed the work of Cilicia and Syria to Paul and Silas.

Chapter 16

I. Paul meets Timothy as he and Silas travel through Galatia (16:1-5):

- A. *“And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium”* (16:1-2).
1. Timothy was the son of a Jewish woman and Greek father. He had been taught the Old Testament scriptures from his youth by his mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois (see II Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Apparently Timothy was baptized by Paul during the first preaching tour through these Galatian cities (see II Tim. 1:2). We continue to run across the word *“believed”* in relation to one's being baptized for the remission of sins (see Acts 13:38-39, 48; 14:1) (see study # 71).
 2. Approximately four years had elapsed since Paul and Barnabas had established the churches in the area of Galatia. During these years Timothy had gained a *“well reported”* reputation among the brethren.
- B. *“Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek”* (16:3).
1. Paul was apparently very impressed with Timothy's conviction and requested that he be a traveling companion in the work of the Lord. Timothy accepts and together the three men continue on the second tour of preaching.
 2. Before Timothy could accompany Paul and Silas he would need to be circumcised *“because of the Jews that were in those parts.”* A question may naturally arise in relation to Timothy's circumcision as compared to Titus not being circumcised. Paul wrote the Galatians saying, *“But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you”* (Gal. 2:3-4). Many erring Christians today believe that this is an example of brethren having doctrinal differences and simply tolerating these differences with each other. These same brethren tell us

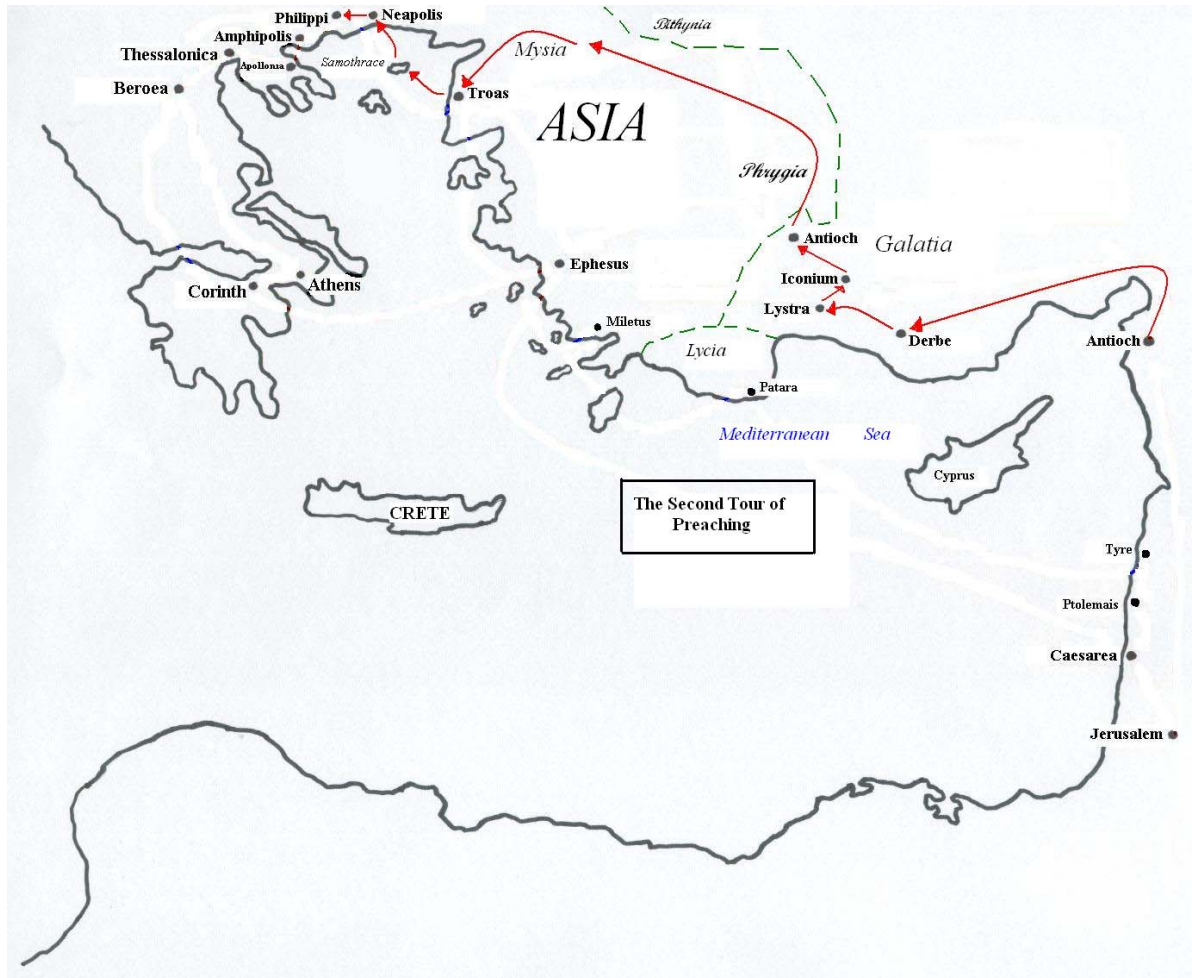
that this is the very subject of Romans 14 (i.e., let us accept and tolerate other brethren whom we disagree with over doctrinal issues). Nothing could be further from the truth! Circumcision was a liberty not a doctrine that men were commanded to obey. Why did Paul circumcise Timothy but not permit Titus to be circumcised?

- a. Titus would not be circumcised because “*false brethren*” were teaching that in order for the Greeks to be saved they must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law (see Acts 15:1-5). If Paul would have had Titus go along with this false teaching it would have been damaging to the souls of other Gentiles. All would come to believe that circumcision is necessary had an apostle of Jesus Christ made Titus do so at the bidding of the “*false brethren*.”
 - b. Timothy; however, was in a different situation. Timothy was not being told to be circumcised for salvation but rather Paul circumcised him “*because of the Jews... for they all knew his father was a Greek.*” If Timothy would have remained uncircumcised he would not have been given an opportunity to talk to the “*Jews*” about their salvation. Timothy would be dealing with non-Christian Jews whereas Titus was being compelled by Jewish Christians. We must recall that the subject of circumcision was a non-salvation issue (i.e., a matter of indifference with God) (see I Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Col. 3:11). Those who press such liberties on others do not walk in love (see Rom. 14:15). Paul would not permit overzealous Christians to force their opinions on Titus under the guise of it being the doctrine of Christ (see Acts 15:24).
- C. “*And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily*” (16:4-5).
1. Paul, Silas, and Timothy travel the cities of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch delivering the “*decrees*” that had been written in an epistle by the Apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem. Paul wanted to make sure that this false doctrine not subvert the souls of the Galatians. The word “*decree*” (*dogma*) = “A public decree, ordinance” (LS 207). “A decree, statute or ordinance, Lk. 2:1; Acts 16:4; 17:7; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14” (Moulton 104). The decree was part of the law of Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:2) or gospel message (Eph. 1:13). This decree was a command of God. The writing was therefore inspired and accepted as a matter of the faith (Jude 3). Remember that the Holy Spirit had been involved in this decree (see Acts 15:28).
 2. Luke then records that the churches were strengthened by the edification and they increased in number daily. Three things to note here:
 - a. There was edification taking place among the saints of God through the preaching of Paul, Silas, and Timothy (see study # 65).
 - b. Secondly, note that the church was growing on a daily basis due to the preaching effort of the brethren (see study # 38).
 - c. Lastly, it must be noted that nothing is said about the Galatian’s apostasy mentioned in the book that bears their name. It is likely that at this point of time the Galatians had only been infected by the doctrine. Through time many would come to accept these doctrines. Paul, thereby, has not as of yet written the book of Galatians.

II. Paul, Silas, and Timothy Travel to Macedonia (16:6-12):

- A. “*And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: there was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them*” (16:6-10).
1. Luke does not tell us why the three men were forbidden to speak in Asia and Bithynia (it may have been that the area was too hostile). While in Troas Paul sees a vision of a man calling the brethren to come into Macedonia to preach the gospel. The three men consider the vision God’s will and travel into Macedonia where many churches would be eventually established and much people saved.

2. Notice the third person plural pronouns “*they and them*” in Luke’s narrative. Interestingly Luke switches the third person to first person plural pronoun “*we.*” Luke modestly introduces himself into the text as Paul, Silas, and Timothy’s traveling companion. Apparently Luke met up with the three men at Troas and continued with them over to Macedonia. Little is known about Luke other than he was a Gentile physician (Col. 4:11-14).
3. Nothing is said about preaching in Troas; however, it appears that a church was established there (Cf. II Cor. 2:12).
4. Consider the following map that indicates the travels of this second tour of preaching.



- B. “*Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, and Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days*” (16:11-12).
1. Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke set sail westward from Troas to Samothrace through the Aegean Sea. The four men spend the night at the island and the next day travel northward through the Aegean Sea to the port city Neapolis. Leaving Neapolis, the four travel twelve miles westward to Philippi.
 2. Philippi was “*the first of the district, a Roman colony.*” Philippi was first made a Roman city within one of the four provinces of Macedonia in 168 BC. A Roman “*colony*” (*kolonia*) is best identified by Thayer as a city that is considered “*the chief city.*” Philippi was given this designation by Octavianus in 42 BC after defeating Brutus and Cassius of Rome. Octavianus celebrated the victory by naming Philippi the “*chief city*” of the province in Macedonia (Cf. Thayer 354).

III. The Conversion of Lydia (16:13-15):

- A. *“And on the Sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together”* (16:13).
1. Apparently there was no synagogue in Philippi. It may be that Paul and his companions had asked around town regarding the whereabouts of a Jewish place of worship.
 2. The information led them to a river outside of town where women met to pray. Once Paul and his companions find the place of prayer they preach the gospel to those present.
- B. *“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us”* (16:14-15).
1. Lydia was a business woman of Thyatira who sold purple dye. The city of Thyatira was located in the province of Asia known as Lydia. Lydia, no doubt, was named after this geographic location. Thyatira “was famous in the ancient world both for its highly organized trade unions and for its special technology for producing ‘purple’ (Turkish red) dye from the madder root rather than shell fish” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 846). “Purple” was “the most highly prized dye in the ancient world obtained from the secretions of four mollusks native to the eastern Mediterranean... Various shades could be produced by mixing secretions from different species, by adding salt or other substances, or by using procedures such as double dyeing... The importance of this industry can be seen in the name Phoenicia, which derives from *phoinikous*, ‘red-purple.’ Since approximately eight thousand mollusks were required to produce one gram of purple dye, purple cloth was extremely expensive, and the Bible refers to it almost exclusively as used by kings or for cultic purposes” (ISBE v. 3, pp. 1057).
 2. Lydia was not only a business woman but she also *“worshipped God.”* This business woman of faith *“heard”* the gospel of Jesus Christ being taught by Paul and the Lord *“opened her heart to give heed unto the things Paul spoke.”* How did God *“open”* Lydia’s heart?
 - a. The word *“open”* means *“to open and explain”* (LS 192)... *“To open the mind, the heart, so as to understand and receive”* (Moulton 94)... *“To open the sense of the Scriptures, explain them, to open the mind of one, i.e. cause him to understand a thing, to open one’s soul, i.e. to rouse in one the faculty of understanding or the desire of learning”* (Thayer 140)... *“Open the ears; make understanding possible, the heart; enable someone to perceive”* (AG 187).
 - b. The Lord worked through the gospel message that Paul spoke and thereby Lydia was caused to understand her sinful state of being. The gospel displays its power not only in instructing one to receive salvation (Rom. 1:16) but also in its manner of exposing the deep sinful secrets of men’s lives (see Jn. 16:8; Heb. 4:12). Having understood her need of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ Lydia, and her immediate family with her, *“gave heed”* to the gospel’s instructions. Recall that the Samaritans had given heed to the things taught by Philip and they were baptized for the remission of their sins (see Acts 8:6, 12). To *“give heed”* (*prosecho*): *“to assent to, yield credence to, follow, adhere or be attached to”* (Moulton 349). The message was preached, Lydia heard, she understood the words and yielded to the gospel’s demands (i.e., God opened her heart). The gospel preached to Lydia was the same gospel message that Peter preached on Pentecost in Acts 2, Philip preached to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. Lydia heard the same gospel Ananias preached to Saul in Acts 9 and Peter preached to the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. Therefore she heard of Jesus, believed upon His name, confessed Jesus to be the savior of the world, repented of her sins and was baptized for the remission of those sins (Cf. Acts 16:15 below).
 - c. Did the Holy Spirit come upon Lydia and physically open her mind against her will? No! Her mind was opened because she first heard the gospel preached as in every case of conversion in the book of Acts! We often say, *“Have an open mind”* when discussing an important topic. That simply means weigh the ideas and thoughts and make a decision. That which opened Lydia’s mind was the word of God. God draws people to him through hearing, learning, and teaching (Jn. 6:44-45). The gospel message enlightened her to the truth, convicted her of sin, instructed her to receive the remission of sins, and in this way God opened her mind to it. She now understood the truth because of revelation!

- d. After the conversion of Lydia, she hospitably “*constrained*” (persuaded) Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke to abide at her house (16:15).

IV. Paul and Silas are Arrested in Philippi (16:16-24):

- A. “*And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying*” (16:16).
 1. A short time after Lydia’s conversion Paul, Timothy, Silas, and Luke were headed to the “*place of prayer*” and were met by a “*maid having a spirit of divination.*” A “*spirit of divination*” (*pneuma puthona*) (spirit of a python): “in Greek mythology the name of the Pythian serpent or dragon that dwelt in the region of Pytho at the foot of Parnassus in Phocis, and was said to have guarded the oracle of Delphi and been slain by Apollo” (Thayer 557). “Later, equivalent to a soothsaying (foretelling or predicting future events) ventriloquist; a soothsaying demon” (Moulton 356).
 2. “*Soothsaying*” (*manteuomai*) = “a soothsayer... to utter oracles, to divine [the art or act of foretelling future events or revealing occult knowledge by means of augury or alleged supernatural agency / AHD 412]” (Moulton 257).
 3. This maiden, through the work of an actual spirit, was able to predict and foretell future events (see Acts 16:18). Her gift of foretelling things brought monetary gain to her masters.
- B. “*The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation. And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour*” (16:17-18).
 1. A man possessed of an “*unclean spirit*” named “*Legion*” said similar things at Luke 8:26-30. Many days went by with this maiden following Paul, Timothy, Silas, and Luke around saying, “*These men are servants of the Most High God...*”
 2. Why would Paul be “*sore troubled*” at the girl’s proclamation of truth? The maiden’s words were apparently of a demonic origin. Paul did not want to hear a demon speak the things of God’s salvation. Such would be a conflict of interest. While Paul and his companions spoke divine revelation and confirmed it with signs, wonders, and miracles so the soothsaying maiden had the potential of teaching error and confirming it by deception through her soothsaying. Paul knew the potential danger of error and so commanded that the unclean spirit come out of the girl “*in the name of Jesus Christ*” (i.e., by His authority).
- C. “*But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, and when they had brought them unto the magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans*” (16:19-21).
 1. The maiden’s masters made a living off the girl’s ability to predict future events yet now this ability had been divinely striped at the command of Paul and by the authority of Jesus Christ. These men were now irritated with Paul and Silas because their way of making an easy buck was gone.
 2. The maid’s masters demand a trial and punishment against Paul and Silas for doing this deed. The charge brought against them was that they “*set forth customs which is not lawful for us to receive or observe being Romans.*” Were these men saying that Christianity was not a Roman Authorized religion? Were they saying that Paul and Silas taught Romans to perform religious acts that would put them in violation with Roman Law? It may be that the same charges levied against Christ were laid upon Paul and Silas in regard to setting up a government over Rome and its Caesars (see John 19:12-13). Whenever a convenient scheme was needed to thwart the progression of the gospel the Jews would pull the “*kingship*” issue on the Christians (see also Acts 17:7).
- D. “*And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks*” (16:22-24).
 1. The “*magistrates*” seem to be just as charged up against Paul and Silas as the masters of the girl. The masters must have said the magic words to get them to move so aggressively against Paul and

Silas. Their anger was transferred to the punishment. Paul and Silas are beat with “*many stripes*” (see II Cor. 11:25).

2. After beating Paul and Silas they put them in prison to be held fast in stocks.

V. **The Conversion of the Philippian Jailer (16:25-34):**

- A. “*But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened: and every one’s bands were loosed*” (16:25-26).
 1. Paul and Silas were in no mood for sleeping seeing that they had been beat and were held in stocks within the Philippian prison. These men of God do two things. They prayed and they sang “*hymns*.” The word “*hymn*” (Greek – *Humnos*) = “a hymn, festive song or ode, in praise of gods or heroes” (LS 829). “A song; a hymn, song of praise to God” (Moulton 413). “Christian hymns are reflexive and expressive of gratitude to God for all that He has done for the world’s reconciliation” (ISBE, Vo. 2, pp. 789). The hymn appears to be a song of praise (cf. Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12 for the use of *humnos* in NT). These “*hymns*” that the early Christians sung were not confined to the first day of the week assemblies. Here we find an example of two men of faith singing praises to God apart from the assembly.
 2. As Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns a miraculous earthquake occurred which caused the doors of the prison to be opened and all the prisoner’s bands (handcuffs) were loosed. The prisoners had been miraculously freed.
- B. “*And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here*” (16:27-28).
 1. The fact that the guard was about the kill himself due to the prisoners escaping illustrates that there would be strict punishment awaiting him. Rather than letting his superiors humiliate, torture, and even kill him he decides to take his own life.
 2. Paul “*cried with a loud voice*” when he saw what the guard was about to do to himself. Paul tells the guard not to harm himself because not one prisoner had escaped. Apparently all had voluntarily remained within their cells.
- C. “*And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*” (16:29-30).
 1. The jailor can scarcely believe his eyes. The miraculous earthquake has released all prisoners; however, none of them have left.
 2. The jailor is fearful of the entire event and can say nothing else but, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved.*” It is most probable that Paul and Silas’ songs and prayers included words that indicated man’s judgment and resurrection from the dead. Once the earthquake occurs he is convinced that their teachings were correct.
- D. “*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house*” (16:31).
 1. Paul and Silas instruct the jailor to “*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*” in order to be saved from the consequences sins committed.
 2. We could, like many in religious denominations, stop at verse 31 and without any regard for the entire book of Acts conclude that a simple belief in Jesus eternally saves one.
 3. Please note; however, that such a conclusion does violence to the interpretation of the entire book. Note that others were told to believe and that belief meant their obedience to the gospel message (see Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:48; 13:12, 38-39). Man makes his faith in Jesus manifest to God through acts of obedience (see Heb. 11:1ff) (see study # 71).
- E. “*And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God*” (16:32-34).
 1. Lets notice the progression of the jailor’s conversion:
 - a. The jailor is no doubt familiar with Christ and His teachings seeing that he asks what he must do to be saved before Paul and Silas preach to him.

- b. The jailor trembles with fear at the sight of an obvious miracle and the fact that not one prisoner had escaped even though they could have very easily done so.
 - c. The jailor asks, “*What must I do to be saved?*”
 - d. Paul and Silas answer, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus.*”
 - e. The “*belief*” included being **baptized** for the remission of sins (see Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15 and here) (see study # 16).
 - f. We conclude then that when one believes that Jesus is the Christ that one will be baptized to receive the very gift that Jesus offers; i.e., the forgiveness of sins (see Eph. 1:7; 2:8).
 - g. Note also that all within the jailor’s house believed (i.e., they were all baptized for the forgiveness of their sins).
2. After the jailor and his house were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins they washed Paul and Silas’ wounds and fed them at their house.
 3. This is all we know of the church in Philippi before Paul writes a letter to them that bears their name. A church may have met in Lydia’s house and in the house of the jailor.

VI. Paul and Silas are released from Prison (16:35-40):

- A. “*But when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. And the jailor reported the words to Paul, saying, the magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace*” (16:35-36).
 1. The next morning (after the jailor and his household had been converted) the magistrates send word to the jail that Paul and Silas should be released.
 2. The converted jailor is excited for Paul and Silas and gives them the word.
- B. “*But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, un-condemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out*” (16:37).
 1. The magistrates were guilty of acting upon their violent impulses rather than rational when they beat and imprisoned Paul and Silas. Paul’s words illustrate the importance of civil law and the fact that no man, not even the magistrates, were above the civil laws of their land.
 2. Lenski quotes from Cicero saying, “To fetter a Roman citizen was a crime, to scourge him a scandal, to slay him – patricide.”³ The magistrates had made a grave civil error. Paul now demands, through a spirit of righteous indignation, that these magistrates come to the prison themselves and let them go (see study # 51 and # 55).
- C. “*And the serjeants reported these words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans; and they came and besought them; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed*” (16:38-40).
 1. The magistrates feared greatly when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens because punishing a Roman without a fair trial could mean death for the responsible parties. The magistrates thereby quickly come to the jail and plead with Paul and Silas to just forget the matter and leave the city. Paul and Silas had a real opportunity to sue these men and pursue justice by the courts of men; however, they had no such interest. Such actions would not have helped in the saving of their souls (see study # 51).
 2. To the relief of the magistrates Paul and Silas do leave but not before visiting the brethren at Lydia’s house. After some unspecified time of comforting them they left for the next city.

Chapter 17

I. Paul and Silas preach Jesus to the Thessalonians (17:1-9):

- A. “*Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:*” (17:1).
 1. Consider the map below regarding the geography covered.

³ Lenski, R. C. H. Commentary on the New Testament; Acts pg. 687

2. Take careful note that Luke has once again shifted to the third person plural pronoun “*they*.” Luke has apparently remained in Philippi preaching the gospel. Our narrator will continue to use the third person plural pronoun “*they*” until the 20th chapter of Acts. At Acts 20:5-6 we find Paul passing back through the city of Philippi while on his third tour. The year is now approximately AD 51. Paul returns to Philippi in about AD 58. Luke must have remained in Philippi for around seven years preaching.
 3. Timothy has apparently remained behind in either Philippi with Luke or Thessalonica alone. Sometime while Paul and Silas are in Beroea Timothy joins them (see Acts 17:10, 14).
- B. *“and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ”* (17:2-3).
1. Paul did not go to a street corner and begin yelling, he did not put ads in the local market to hold a gospel meeting, and neither did he sit with his two companions in a house hoping that a visitor would come in to discuss Bible matters. Paul went where the religiously minded people were and “*reasoned with them from the scriptures.*” To reason with those who could care less is to waste one’s time. Paul went to those who professed a faith in God first (see study # 30).
 2. Paul took his listeners back through history to prove that Jesus was none other than the Christ (i.e., Jesus’ manner and place of birth, his life, his miracles, his teaching, his death, and his resurrection). Paul had previously preached such a lesson at Acts 13:16 (see study # 63). Stephen (Acts 7) and Peter (Acts 2) had also preached a similar sermon. The message was a proof, through examination of the OT scriptures and the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, that Jesus was “*the Christ*” (i.e., the Messiah prophesied in the OT). Paul’s sermon, much like those sermons preached before and the same preached today, demanded the listeners to give heed to the message.
- C. *“And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few”* (17:4).
1. Some listening within the confines of the synagogues were persuaded by Paul and Silas regarding the message of Christ. Their “*persuasion*” was moved to being “*consorted*” (*proskleroo*) = “to adjoin one’s self to, associate with, follow as a disciple” (Moulton 350)... “To be attached to, keep company with” (LS 693). These people not only agreed and were persuaded by Paul and Silas’ message but they also ‘adjoined’ (were contiguous or stood side by side) with Paul and Silas. Their complete agreement caused them to be in unity of thought with Paul and Silas. We must now consider the context of this entire study and answer the following questions regarding the Thessalonians. Did these Jews, devout Greeks, and chief women simply join themselves with Paul and Silas and thereby received salvation? Were the Thessalonians saved when they believed the words of Paul and Silas? Was salvation even a part of Paul’s message? The answer to all these questions can be answered by not only the context of our study but also Paul’s statement to the Corinthians. Paul said, “*For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church*” (I Cor. 4:17). Nothing had changed in the message or the requirements to take advantage of Christ’s blood that was shed for the remission of man’s sins (see Matt. 26:26ff). Men were commanded to do the same thing (i.e., hear, believe, confess, repent, be baptized, and remain faithful till death).
 2. The power of the gospel is that it changes men’s lives. Note that the church continued to grow as “*multitudes*” of devout Greeks (as well as Jews and chief women) obeyed the gospel in Thessalonica. The church of this city is now established (see study # 38).
- D. *“But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people”* (17:5).
1. The term “*But*” illustrates, once again, the distinction between the followers of Christ and those who rejected him (see also Acts 2:40-47; 3:19-23; 4:11, 23, 32; 5:13-14; 6:9) (see study # 39). Those who rejected Christ on this occasion were the Jews of Thessalonica. These Jews were “*jealous*” just as the high priest and Jews of Acts 5:17-18 and the Jews of Antioch of Pisidia (within Galatia) (Acts 13:44-45). The high priest and Jews saw that the multitudes ran after the

apostles and it caused them to be jealous. They wanted the multitudes to run after them. Such a state of mind is sinful because it accentuates self interest over eternal life (see Matt. 21:15-16; Gal. 5:20).

2. These jealous unbelieving Jews searched out *“vile fellows of the rabble”* to stir up a crowd and city wide uproar. The entire English phrase *“vile fellows of the rabble”* is two words in the Greek i.e., *poneros* (“evil, wrongful, malignant, malevolent” [Moulton 336]) *agoraios* (“one who visits the forum; a lounge, one who idles away his time in public places, a low fellow” [Moulton 5]). The Nestle and Marshal Interlinear Greek – English New Testament words is as, “loungers in the marketplace men some wicked” (NM 543). The point is clear. The jealous Jews went to idle men they knew were of no scruples and motivated them (possibly by pay) to stir up an uproar against Paul and Silas.
 3. Paul and Silas had apparently been lodging with a man named Jason and all knew this. The vile fellows take their mob to Jason’s house supposing to find Paul and Silas yet they are not there.
- E. *“And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus”* (17:6-7).
1. The vile fellows, with their mob, did not find Paul and Silas so they capture *“Jason and certain brethren”* and drag them to the rulers of the city for a trial.
 2. The accusations against Paul, Silas, and Jason are threefold:
 - a. First, Paul, Silas, Jason, and other brethren have *“turned the world upside down”* (the inference is with their teaching about Jesus and the end of the Mosaic system). Such teaching caused public stirs and ought to be stopped.
 - b. Secondly, Jason is guilty by association with such men.
 - c. Thirdly, the teaching of Jesus being king contradicts the decrees of Caesar as the sole king of the Roman Empire (see also Acts 16:19-21 and John 19:12-13).
- F. *“And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go”* (17:8-9).
1. The news of setting up another king was cause for concern and trouble among the multitudes and rulers of Thessalonica (the jealous Jews’ plan succeeded).
 2. The rulers take *“security”* (“security or bail” money [Moulton 200]) from Jason and the other brethren and let them go free. The taking of bail money from Jason and the brethren was an outward sign of the city’s disagreement of Paul and Silas’ teaching. All they heard was that these Christians taught that Jesus was to replace Caesar as king (they heard nothing else).

II. Paul and Silas travel to Beroea (17:10-15):

- A. *“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews”* (17:10).
1. Consider this map for locations of travel.
 2. The disturbed multitudes of the city of Thessalonica made it very dangerous for Paul and Silas to remain. The brethren send them to Beroea.
- B. *“Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so”* (17:11).



1. Upon entering the city of Bereoa Paul and Silas went immediately to the synagogue of the Jews to, once again, preach the word of God.
 2. The Jews of Bereoa were of a different disposition than those of Philippi and Thessalonica. They were “*more noble*” (*eugenes*) = “generous, ingenuous (without sophistication or worldliness), candid” (Moulton 172). “Open minded” (AG 319). The Bereoaean Jews, unlike those of Thessalonica, were not interested in impressing people with who they were or what they had. They were simply interested in truth. They listened with a ready mind and furthermore they “examined the scriptures daily” to see whether the things Paul and Silas were teaching coincided with the Word of God. Respect for Bible authority and the fear of Jehovah God was a part of their thinking. All those who will come to Christ will have no other mind. When man is interested in spiritual things, respects the authorized Word of God, and is willing to compare words he hears with divine revelation then a true disciple of Christ is born.
- C. “*Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few*” (17:12).
1. When the Beoreans heard and searched out the words of Paul and Silas by comparing them to the scriptures “*many of them believed.*” Over and over again we find men and women who “believed” and that means that they heard, believed, confessed the name of Christ, repented of sins, were baptized for the remission of their sins, were added to the church as Christians, and purposed within their hearts to live obedient to the teachings of Christ from here on out (Acts 13:38-38; 14:1-2 etc.) (See study # 71).
 2. The church continues to grow throughout Macedonia because Paul and Silas went to places where religiously minded people had gathered (see study # 38).
- D. “*But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Bereoa also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes*” (17:13).
1. The Jews at Thessalonica were jealous of Paul and Silas’ following. They were not interested in truth as many of the Beoreans were. When these jealous Jews heard that Paul and Silas were preaching and gaining a following among their neighbors the Beoreans they decided to put a stop to it. Once again they stir up the multitudes against the men of God with no doubt the same arguments (Paul and Silas taught that there was another king other than Caesar).
 2. The multitudes came to be stirred up and troubled over the teaching of the gospel. Once again, the environment became too hostile for Paul to remain.

E. “*And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still. But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed*” (17:14-15).

1. When the brethren at Bereoa gained intelligence of the coming Jews, they sent Paul away to the coast of the Aegean Sea. The brethren of Bereoa escorted Paul all the way down to Athens.
2. Luke records the name of Timothy in 17:14 indicating that Timothy must have joined Paul and Silas in Bereoa at some point.



3. Once Paul is in Athens the brethren from Berea, who had escorted him, returned home. Paul gives the Bereans a message to give to Silas and Timothy. That message was that the two were to meet Paul quickly in Athens (17:15).
4. Silas and Timothy must have received this letter of request and came to Athens immediately (I Thess. 3:1-2). Paul; however, was very concerned about the Thessalonian brethren and sent Timothy back to the city and Silas possibly back to Berea or Philippi.

III. Paul Preaches in Athens (17:16-34):

- A. *“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols”* (17:16).
 1. The city of Athens was “named after the patron goddess Athena, and the capital of the important Greek state of Attica, which became the cultural center of the ancient pre-Christian world” (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary pp. 122) (see map below for location). Athens was known for its love and attraction for idols of all sorts.
 2. When Paul arrived in Athens he looked upon the altars of the various deities and his *“spirit was provoked within him.”* To be *“provoked”* (*paroxuno*) = “stirred up” (Moulton 310). Paul was bothered by these idols (see study # ; Attitude Toward Sin).
- B. *“So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him. And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? Others, He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection”* (17:17-18).
 1. Paul had earlier *“reasoned”* with the Thessalonians regarding the Christ and now *“reasons”* with the Athenians in the synagogue and market place. Paul was all about preaching. He was a single man with no family per se and his sole function, as an Apostles of Jesus Christ, was the advancement of the doctrine of Jesus and the salvation of men’s souls.
 2. The philosophers of Athens apparently heard that a *“babbler”* by the name of Paul was teaching about *“strange gods.”* A *“babbler”* (*spermologos*) = “seed-picking; one who picks up and retails scraps of information; a babbler” (Moulton 373). The learned philosophers saw Paul as one who had attained bits of knowledge to disperse. Consider these types of Philosophers:
 - a. The *“Epicurean philosophers:”* “Members of a philosophical movement initiated by Epicurus (341 – 270 BC) on Lesbos off the western coast of Asia Minor (311bC) and taken to Athens (306 BC)... during the 1st cent. BC became identified with hedonism. The teachings of Epicurians: Epicurus and his followers devoted themselves primarily to the pursuit of personal, individual happiness... It is well known (even today) that Epicurus believed that human happiness consisted in pleasure (Greek *hedone*)... Epicurus taught that there is no life after physical death” (ISBE v. 2, pp. 120-121).
 - b. The *“Stoic philosophers:”* “Stoicism was founded in Athens by Zeno (322-260 B.C.) and acquired its name from the painted porch (*stoa*) in the Agora where its proponents taught... Fundamental to the Stoic view of reality was the postulate of an all-determinative cosmic force which could be popularly identified as Zeus... Stoics denied and suppressed passions and emotions” (ISBE v. 4, pg. 622).
 3. Paul *“preached Jesus and the resurrection”* and caused a spark of interest in the philosophers (see study # 63).
- C. *“And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing.)”* (17:19-21).
 1. The philosophers’ interest was peaked and they demanded to know more of this strange but interesting teaching about Christ and man’s resurrection from the dead (Remember, the Epicurians taught that there was no life after death).
 2. The interested Athenians escort Paul a hill called the *“Areopagus.”* “There are two traditions as to how the hill got its name. According to one, it was named for Ares the god of War, who was put on trial there for the slaying of Halirrhotos the son of Poseidon; hence the AV designation in Acts 17:22 (Ares has been identified with the Roman god Mars). The other tradition understands the

name Areopagus to mean the ‘hill of the Arai.’ The Arai (curses), more popularly known as the Furies, were goddesses whose task was avenging murder. If this tradition is true the name was very fitting, for the Areopagus was the place where cases of homicide were tried... The name of the hill was given later to the council whose meetings were held upon it. The council of the Areopagus retained this name even when its meetings were transferred from the hill to the Royal Stoa” (ISBE v. 1, pp. 287). Paul may have thereby been taken to the hill for a trial or hearing by the Areopagus council or it may be that he was taken there so that he may address more people.

The text tells us that he was taken there so that they may “*know what this new teaching is.*”

- D. “*And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you*” (17:22-23).

1. The Apostle Paul stands in the midst of the hill with an interested audience and begins to speak. He begins by noting their obvious “*religious*” inclinations. The word “*religious*” (*deisidaimonesterous*) = “Fear of the gods, religious feeling” (LS 177). “Reverencing the gods and divine things, religious; in a bad sense, superstitious; in N.T. careful and precise in the discharge of religious services Acts 17:22” (Moulton 86). Paul apparently walked throughout the city examining and reading the inscriptions written upon the altars of the various deities.
2. The people of Athens were careful to have altars of worship for every known deity. They had even erected an altar to the “*UNKNOWN GOD*” so as not to leave any out. The word “*unknown*” (*agnostos*) = “unknown” (Moulton 4). This is the exact equivalent to the English word “agnostic” (i.e., Someone who believes that there can be no proof of the existence of God but does not deny the possibility that God exists... hence ‘a’ (no or not) ‘*gnostos*’ (known)” (AHD 87). The philosophers certainly did not deny the existence of gods yet seem to have no true allegiance to any one deity.
3. The Athenians even rendered “*worship*” to this unknown god. The word “*worship*” (*eusebeo*) = “to exercise piety [religious devotion and reverence to God... devotion to parents and family]; towards a deity, to worship; towards relatives, to be dutiful towards” (Moulton 176).
4. Paul explains to the people of Athens that he will now set forth the identity and expectations of the one true God that they had erected an altar for and worshiped in ignorance.

- E. “*The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself gives to all life, and breath, and all things*” (17:24-25).

1. The Athenians worshiped a multitude of gods and had even erected an altar to the “*UNKNOWN GOD.*” Paul uses this “*unknown*” as a springboard for exposing the true God that the Athenians were ignorant of. The next three verses deliver seven aspects of Jehovah God. A great comparison to this text is found at Revelation 4:8-11 (see study # 96; The Nature of Jehovah).
2. Paul explains God **first** to the Athenians by revealing that He is the originator or prime mover of all that exists; i.e., the “*world and all things therein.*” The Athenians were challenged to look in all directions and know that Jehovah God made all the eye could see. This very statement would have caused a stir due to the fact that the Stoics believed Zeus was the prime mover and cause of all things that existed. No doubt that after these first few words Paul had their undivided attention.
3. **Secondly**, Paul states that God is the “*Lord of heaven and earth.*” Not only is Jehovah God the creator of all things but he is the “*Lord*” (*kurios*) = “a potentate [one who has power and position to rule over others], sovereign [having supreme rank and power], a term of respect of various force (i.e., Sir, Lord)” (Moulton 244). The God that Paul reveals to the Athenians is the creator and potentate of all that man knows. Surely the Athenians would be taken aback over such statements of such a supreme being.
4. **Thirdly**, God is not only creator of all things in the heavens and earth, not only is He one of supreme power and position on earth, but He does not “ *dwell in temples made with hands.*” God is omnipresent and cannot (or will not) be confined to one place to dwell. Those who construct great and expensive architectural temples to God do so for personal aesthetic reasons. No matter how attractive or expensive the building God will not be lured in. God’s nature is not to be confined in

- a single place. Jeremiah wrote of God saying, “*I fill heaven and earth... there is no where man can hide from me*” (Jer. 23:24). God dwells within man’s heart rather than temples made by man’s hand (Eph. 3:17; I Jn. 4:12-16).
5. **Fourthly**, God is not “*served by men’s hands, as though he needed anything...*” God does not need men to serve him gifts or to provide food for him. God does not need man construct with their hands a temple, an image of him, or new laws made up of their own mind and will. God is actually one who helps man by meeting man’s needs for food, clothing, and shelter. God creates, is potentate, cannot be contained in a temple, and is self sustaining.
 6. **Fifthly**, “*he himself gives to all life, breath, and all things.*” God needs no things from man to be sustained; however, man is in dire need of God for survival. God gives live, breath, and all things. All blessings of life (i.e., our births, the very breath we take in, and sustenance that maintains our health come from Jehovah God). Without God man would never had existed. God created man and man is completely dependant upon the Lord for life here and in eternity.
- F. “*and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us:*” (17:26-27).
1. The **sixth** identifier of God is that he has even created man. Jehovah God created Adam and through this one man’s seed the millions and millions of people in the world have come. Every part of man’s life is known and controlled by the providence of God (i.e., he determined their appointed seasons and bounds of habitation). Man dwells upon the earth as designed by God to sustain life. Though the cosmos may be beautiful to behold there is no life sustaining atmosphere likened unto earth. After a short time upon this planet man dies and their season ends. God determined all these things for man.
 2. The Lord created the world. He is the potentate of this world. He is omnipresent and has no need of man such as food, clothing, shelter in a temple, and neither does He need man’s idolatry. God provides all things that man needs in this life to sustain himself. Paul states that God is, in fact, the creator of man. The **seventh** part of God that man ought to be aware of is that after we identify the true God of heaven and earth man ought to naturally “*seek God*” (see Ps. 19:1ff; Rom. 1:20). To “*seek*” (*zeteo*) = “to ask about a thing, to search after, search out, inquire into, investigate... to feel the want of” (LS 344)... “to search after... to pursue, endeavor to obtain... to desire, wish, want... to seek, strive for” (Moulton 182). God is responsible for the creation of both the world and man. He reigns as potentate and sovereign ruler over all creation. God sustains man on this earth by meeting his every need. These facts are designed to cause man to naturally gravitate to the Lord out of a since of “*seeking*” after him (see study # 76).
 3. Men who dwell in darkened understanding of Jehovah’s sovereign existence may also find him if they would only “*feel after him*” in the since of simply looking about themselves and concluding that they are wonderfully made as is all creation. The natural conclusion is that there is one sovereign deity behind all these things (see study # 83; Man’s Nature).
- G. “*for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring*” (17:28).
1. The **seventh** characteristic of Jehovah God is that man is **completely dependant** upon Him in every aspect of our existence. If God gives “*life, breath, and all things*” (Acts 17:25)... If God created all humanity of one man (Adam) and determined each man’s boundaries of age and geography in the cosmos (Acts 17:26-27) then man apart from God will not exist. Man “*lives, moves, and has our being*” (every thing about our lives; i.e., our very existence, our wives, husbands, children, work, food, material possessions, etc.) by the very act of God in our lives. Man’s “*being*” (*eimi*) [existence – LS 229] is wholly dependant upon the existence of the one true deity Jehovah God.
 - a. To further illustrate this point Paul states that “*we are also his offspring*” (i.e., created by Jehovah). He is our Father who sustains us as His beloved children (see Lk. 3:38).
 - b. Man is created in the image of God and we are thereby His offspring (Gen. 1:27).
 2. Paul explains to the Athenians that their own poets have confessed such knowledge and even made these very statements. Who were these poets and how did Paul know about these writings?

Lenski list three possibilities that Paul was obviously familiar with: Aratus, Cleanthes and Timagenes. Paul quotes from Greek literature on two other occasions in our New Testament Bibles (I Cor. 15:33 and Titus 1:12). “Paul thereby shows a rather thorough acquaintance with Greek literature, he particularly demonstrates that he had studied and retained in memory certain striking passages. Paul was fully equipped to appear before the Athenians.”⁴

- H. *“Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man”* (17:29).
1. The Athenians were in error by erecting statutes and temples for their idol gods. Paul has thoroughly proved that Jehovah God is the soul reason for man’s existence. Man can thereby in no way rightfully recommend worship to any other deity. Seeing that man is the offspring of God our conclusion; after an examination of our existence, ought to be that the construction of idols made by man’s hand out of gold, silver, or stone is utter foolishness. Moses had told Israel that when they heard God’s laws at Sinai they saw no form and therefore they are never to construct a graven image that would be a representation of him (see Deut. 4:12, 15-16). God is spirit (Jn. 4:24). Paul associates man (the offspring of God) with God and God to the *“Godhead”* (*theios*) = “divinity, deity” (Moulton 193)... “The essential and divine nature of God” (AHD 565). The identity of deity can only be ascertained through the visible creation (Rom. 1:19ff.), divine revelation (Gal. 1:11ff.), and the existence of man (see this sermon). God described himself to Moses by saying, *“I am that I am... I am”* (Ex. 3:14) (see study # 76).
 2. Such a supreme sovereign creator of man and universe cannot be confined to a temple and can in no way be represented in a *“gold, silver, or graven stone by the art and device of man.”* The word *“art”* (*techne*) = “art and skill” (Moulton 403) and the word *“device”* (*enthumesis*) = “the act of thought, cogitation, reflection... the result of thought, invention, device” (Moulton 140). Man cannot use his artful skill to carve a graven image of deity that he has invented within his own mind. The result of the image will be a man’s perception of what deity ought to look like rather than the reality of such an image. Man has better ways of worshiping and finding God. **Let us simply look to our selves (the offspring of God who are living proof that God is), to creation, and to revelation to know God.** The Athenians had made a grave error in worshipping carved images of other deities (see study # 76).
 3. Consider also the fact that those today who invent within their minds ways of worshiping God, ways of living on this earth, and ways of serving God in general have acted against their nature and design in which God created. Such men are idolaters (see II Cor. 5:7; I Jn. 5:21). Said idolaters reject the clear signs of authority that are ever about them (i.e., creation, revelation, and the existence of man) and assign it to another. Such men comprise the sons of perdition (II Thess. 2:3ff) and the spirit of antichrist (I Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; II Jn. 1:7) (see study # 25; and # 84; Modern Idolatry).
- I. *“The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commands men that they should all everywhere repent”* (17:30).
1. Paul has examined the nature of God (He is deity, creator of all things, the potentate and sovereign one over his creation, and the sustainer of man’s lives... He cannot be represented by the art of man’s inventions in the form a graven image because He is omnipresent). Paul has consequentially exposed the Athenians erroneous worship of idolatry. The Apostle Paul now calls upon the Athenians to accept their responsibility toward the one true God. They have lived in ignorance of their potentate creator yet now their one true God demands their repentance.
 2. Paul explains to the Athenians that God had overlooked their days of ignorance in relation to Jehovah God’s laws (see Paul’s sermon to the Galatians at Acts 14:16). God will not; however, always overlook their ignorance. At this very moment, Paul explains, God *“commands men that they should all everywhere repent.”* God has *“overlooked”* (i.e., “Disregarded” / Moulton 415; AG 841) their past lack of knowledge of Him. God had never; however, overlooked man’s responsibility in relation to his nature (see Rom. 2:12-16). Though the Athenians had no prior knowledge of Christ they nonetheless were responsible for lawful living that God innately gave

⁴ Lenski, R. C. H. Commentary on the New Testament; Acts pg. 733

their conscience. Now; however, God demand's man's "*repentance*" (*metanoeo*) = "to undergo a change in frame of mind and feeling, to repent... to make a change of principle and practice, to reform" (Moulton 266). The Athenians had looked to their own inventive minds to artfully create images of god with gold, silver, and stones. Paul now challenges them to undergo a change of mind in relation to their inventive ideas of deity based upon their observation of their very existence, creation, and the hearing of revelation. Now they have heard and know of Christ. Now God demands their baptism into the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins and lawful living. Those who do not bow their knees to Jesus now will at the judgment (see Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10).

- J. *"Inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"* (17:31).
1. The antecedent of "*he*" is Jehovah God (the sovereign creator of man and all there is) who demands that man (whom he has created) "*seek*" Him and "*repent*" (i.e., undergo a change of practices... to reform one's self) (Acts 17:27, 30).
 2. Why has God commanded men to seek Him and repent? God commands man to seek Him and repent because He has "*appointed a day in which he will judge the world*" through Jesus Christ (see Matt. 25:31ff; Jn. 5:22-27; Rev. 20:12ff). Paul had already preached Jesus to the Athenians (see Acts 17:17ff). They were, thereby, familiar with the man Jesus Christ and the prophecies he fulfilled.
 3. To give "*assurance*" (*pistis*) ("guarantee" / Nestle and Marshall pp. 547) = "persuasion of a thing, confidence, assurance" (LS641). The "guarantee or assurance" of man's final judgment (salvation or condemnation) is the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and witnessed in the resurrected state by many (see I Cor. 15:1ff). Just as sure as Christ was raised from the dead even so there will assuredly come a day when man is judged by the Lord. When that day comes no man knows but it will come (see Matt. 25:31ff).
- K. *"Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. Thus Paul went out from among them"* (17:32-33).
1. The gospel message falls upon men's ears and demands a response. Some hearing the message of God, judgment, and the resurrection of the dead "*mocked*" and others were willing to listen and learn more. The word "*mock*" (*chleuazo*) is to "joke, jest, scoff, jeer" (LS 889).
 2. Recall that while Peter preached on Pentecost some mocked in disbelief too (see Acts 2:12-13). Never once did Paul allow men's disbelief to discourage him from his duty to preach. There are always those in the world who "*will hear thee concerning this yet again*" (See study # 89; Different Reactions to Truth).
- L. *"But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them"* (17:34).
1. Paul's sermon in Athens at the Areopagus had a three fold result upon its hearers (see study # 6). First, some mocked. Secondly, others were not fully persuaded yet they were willing to hear more about the matter of God, judgment, resurrection, and salvation. Lastly, there were those who heard and "*believed.*" Among the believers was "*Dionysius*" who was an "*Areopagite*" (i.e., one who was a member of the council of men who met upon the hill called Areopogus – see notes at Acts 17:19). A woman named "*Damaris and others with them*" also obeyed the gospel.
 2. Note once again the use of the word "*believed.*" According to the context of the study of the book of Acts this can mean nothing other than the fact that these people heard the gospel, believed the message, confessed that Jesus is the Christ, repented of their sins, were baptized for the remission of their sins, and were taught to remain faithful all the days of their lives (see Acts 13:38-39, 48; 14:1 etc.) (See study # 71). The more we look into the examples of men and women being converted the more we find that the sermon preached by Peter on Day of Pentecost serves as a foundation sermon for every case of conversion that follows it (Acts 2). After the Pentecost sermon we find sermons being preached, people "*believing,*" and the inference is that they were saved just as those on Pentecost who were baptized (see Acts 4:4; 9:42; 11:21; 13:48; 14:1; 17:12, 34). To stop at man's belief; however, would do violence to God's divine plan of salvation that He delivered through the Apostles and prophets. Notice that there were other sermons preached

where the hearers not only believed but were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (see Acts 2:41; 8:12, 13, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8 etc.). The book of Acts is clear and the Pentecostal sermon thematic for the rest of the book. Man not only heard and believed but the inference is that they were all baptized for the remission of their sins even though it does not say they were in some cases. The final and without doubt proof that baptism was included in every case of conversion that Acts records is found at Acts 13:38-39. Paul equated belief with justification to the people of Antioch of Galatia. When we look to other New Testament books we may connect the dots of faith and justification to baptism. Let me illustrate for you. Acts 13:38-39 equates belief to justification. Romans 5:1-2 equates justification to God's grace. Ephesians 1:7 and 2:8 equates God's grace with man's redemption and the forgiveness of sins. Where would we go next? How does one receive the forgiveness of sins? Peter's Pentecost sermon clearly tells us: *"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38) (See study # 8).

Chapter 18

I. Paul Travels to Corinth (18:1-3):

A. *"After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth"* (18:1).

1. Paul leaves Athens peacefully and travels about forty miles west to the city of Corinth. Corinth is located on an isthmus. An isthmus is "a narrow strip of land connecting two larger masses of land" (AHD pg. 681). The two larger masses of land are the southern section of Greece and the Peloponnese (Macedonia and Achaia). The connecting isthmus is five miles across. Sailors, coming from Athens or Asia Minor, often stopped in Corinth walking the five mile isthmus rather than sailing around the Cape of Malea. Sailing around was, to some extent, a treacherous trip due to the strong Mediterranean winds. Because of the geographic location of Corinth, it was perfect for trade and commerce. Most ships on their way westward would stop here. Quick population and economic growth was the result.
2. The city of Corinth was an extremely wealthy city. Along with wealth came the need to be entertained. The Isthmean games were a main source of entertainment to the Corinthians. Occurring every other year, they were similar in nature to the Olympic games of neighboring Olympia. The apostle Paul referred to these games in I Cor. 9:24-27.
3. One can only imagine that in a city with such success and vast population religion would have its place as well. Most cities of this day were devoted to a particular god or goddess. Ephesus was devoted to the goddess Diana. The principle deity worshipped in the city of Corinth was Venus, the goddess of love and licentiousness. Just to the south of the city was a giant rock formation raising 1800 feet above sea level known as the Acrocorinthus. A temple to Venus was erected on the northern side of this mountain. The temple employed 1000 female prostitutes for the worship of Venus. Barnes notes that many merchants lost everything they had in the city of Corinth "worshipping Venus" (Barnes' Notes; pp. iv [Commentary on I Corinthians to Galatians]). A common proverb of their day was: "It is not for everyone to go to Corinth." The city of Corinth reminds us a lot of our modern day Las Vegas, Nevada. It was the "sin city of their day." "What happens in Corinth stays in Corinth" type city. The Apostle Paul came here around the year 51AD and establishes a thriving church.

B. *"And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them"* (18:2).

1. Upon entering the city of Corinth Paul finds a Jew named Aquila with his wife Priscilla. Aquila was from Pontus. Pontus was the province of land joined with Bithynia that was next to the Pontus Euxinus (i.e., modern day Black Sea). This region was the "home of the legendary Amazons, originally Hittite warrior-priestesses" (ISBE v. 3, pp. 903). We recall that Paul, Silas, and Timothy were forbidden to enter Bithynia at Acts 16:7 likely because there were already people preaching there. It is likely that Aquila was already a Christian when Paul met he and his wife due to the

gospel message being earlier preached there (see I Pet. 1:1). Recall that the apostle Peter had preached to men of Pontus on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem and it is likely that they took this message back home with them (see Acts 2:9).

2. Aquila left his home land and traveled to Rome (not clear as to whether he was married to Priscilla and lived in Pontus or met her in Italy). Aquila and Priscilla together left Rome due to an edict made by Claudius AD 51. “The Roman historian Suetonius was probably referring to this command when he wrote that Claudius ‘expelled the Jews because they were continually rioting at the instigation of Crestus.’”⁵ For more on Claudius see detailed notes at Acts 11:27-28.
- C. *“and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers”* (18:3).
1. Luke reveals to us more of the life of the Apostle Paul. We have already noted that he was previously a Pharisee that had been converted to Christianity. Paul had also been chosen by the Lord to serve as an Apostle. Now we find Paul’s trade. Paul was a tentmaker. People have trades, such as making tents, to support themselves. While Paul, at times, received support from brethren for doing the work of the Lord (see Phil. 4:15-16) he at other times did not (i.e., he provided for his own). There is authority for preachers to be financially supported by the church; however, when the support is not there preaching brethren ought to consider a *“trade”* (see I Cor. 9:14).
 2. Paul and Aquila had a common trade as tentmakers and thereby they abode together as they worked.

II. Paul preaches in Corinth (18:4-11):

- A. *“And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ”* (18:4-5).
1. Each time Paul entered a new city he went directly to where religiously minded people met and preached the gospel.
 2. Recall that Paul had arrived in Athens alone and sent word, by mouth of the Beoreans, to have Silas and Timothy join him quickly (see Acts 17:15). Silas and Timothy made it to Athens while Paul was there (I Thess. 3:1-2). Paul’s mind had no ease; however, due to the tribulations that the brethren in Thessalonica were experiencing. Paul thereby sends Timothy back to Thessalonica to see how the brethren fared (I Thess. 3:1-2). Paul likely sent Silas back to Beorea to see how those brethren fared too seeing that we find both Silas and Timothy now meeting him in Corinth. It is most probable that Timothy and Silas had gathered funds from the churches of Macedonia for Paul’s necessities while he preached the gospel and brought it to the Apostle at Corinth (see II Cor. 11:9).
 3. Having now the funds to sustain himself he could leave off making tents and dedicate all his time to preaching. Note that Luke states that Paul was *“constrained”* (*sunecho*) *by the word* (i.e., “to be hard pressed by the urgency of circumstances” [Moulton 389]). Paul preached with a sense of urgency that Jesus was indeed the Christ who died so that the world may be forgiven of their sins. No doubt that preaching full time is much more preferable by Paul and the only way that he could do this was by the help of brethren (just like today) (see study # 77).
- B. *“And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles”* (18:6).
1. Many synagogue members responded by *“opposing themselves and blaspheming.”* To *“oppose themselves”* is (*hantitassomenon de auton*) meaning simply that they **“resisted”** the words of Paul (Cf. Nestle and Marshall’s Interlinear Greek-English New Testament pg. 548). Secondly they *“blasphemed”* (*blasphemeo*) = “to calumniate [to make maliciously false statements about; slander], revile, treat with calumny and contumely... to speak of God or divine things in terms of impious irreverence, to blaspheme” (Moulton 70-71). The scene is one of tense conversation and argumentation regarding Jesus being the Christ. These blaspheming Corinthians slandered and resisted Paul’s words.

⁵ Stringer, J. Commentary on Acts pg. 370

2. Jesus had commanded the Apostles to shake the dust off their feet of any city (or people) that did not give heed to the gospel message (Matt. 10:14-15) as a “*testimony*” against them (Lk. 9:5). Paul had earlier performed this symbolic act at Antioch of Pisidia (i.e., Galatia) (see Acts 13:51-52). Said action indicated that the resisting and blasphemous people’s guilt was upon them; i.e., Paul did all that he could do to change their mind but they were hardened against the truth. He therefore turned away from such people and proclaimed “*I am clean.*” When Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, he commanded, “*give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you*” (Matt. 7:6).
 3. Paul said, “*Your blood be upon your own heads.*” This is a statement borrowed from the OT prophet Ezekiel at 3:18, “*When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.*” (Cf. Ez. 33:1-9). Paul had done his duty; i.e., he warned the wicked and was thereby “*clean*” in respect to their sins. Brethren today are to “*warn*” the wicked (i.e., those who reject, are ignorant, take liberties with, teach error, or attempt to change the gospel message are to be warned). When the apostles brought Old Testament teaching into the New Testament they made it a part of the Law of Christ and binding upon Christians! Paul was “*clean*” in relation to the sins of the wicked of Corinth who rejected and blasphemed the gospel message in that God would not hold him accountable for their sins because he tried to help them (see study # 85; Watching and Warning the Wicked).
- C. “*And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue*” (18:7).
1. Paul leaves those of the synagogue who had rejected and blasphemed the message of the cross. He then goes to a man named Titus Justus (no doubt a Corinthian convert who did not reject and blaspheme the message of the cross).
 2. Titus Justus’ house “*joined hard to the synagogue*” (i.e., “to border upon, to be contiguous {sharing an edge or boundary}, adjoin {to be next to; to attach to}” [Moulton 391]). Titus Justus’ house either shared the same wall as the synagogue or property line (it was right next to the synagogue).
- D. “*And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized*” (18:8).
1. Paul is successful in converting many prominent men and women with the gospel message (see Acts 17:4). Paul succeeds in converting Crispus the “*ruler of the synagogue*” (recall that many members of the synagogue had aggressively opposed Paul’s message). The “*ruler of the synagogue*” was mentioned at Acts 13:15 as not one man but rather a plurality of men. The ruler’s duty included “supervision of the services, maintaining order (Lk. 13:14), inviting a visitor to address the congregation (Acts 13:15), and handing the Scripture scroll from the hazzan to the one who was to read the lesson. The head of the synagogue ranked immediately below the scribes” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 681).
 2. Note that Crispus, and his household, “*heard, believed the message, and were baptized.*” Crispus did exactly what many others before him had done. The book of Acts has painted a clear picture of the steps man must take in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. Crispus was obviously told to be baptized for the remission of his sins (i.e., the very purpose of Christ coming into the world – Matt. 1:21). The apostle Paul mentions Crispus by name as one that he had personally baptized (see I Cor. 1:14) (see study # 16).
- E. “*And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them*” (18:9-11).
1. Those of the synagogue who rejected and blasphemed against the word of God must have made threats against Paul and discouraged him. The Lord thereby appears to the Apostle Paul in the night by a vision and encourages him by saying, “*Be not afraid... speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee...*” The Lord had “*much people*” (i.e., Christians who would stand by Paul’s side) in Corinth.

2. The words of divine encouragement worked. Paul, rather than leaving the city, remains there for one and a half years preaching to the lost and edifying the saints.
3. Current date: One and a half years after Claudius' 51 AD decree would put us at either 52 or 53 AD. It is most probable that Paul wrote I and II Thessalonians during his stay in Corinth (see I Thess. 3:1-3 and compare with Luke's account in Acts of Paul leaving Timothy and Silas behind in Thessalonica and Beorea (Acts 17:14-15) – the only logical conclusion is that Paul wrote the two Thessalonian letters from Corinth – this being the case, we may place a one and a half to two years difference between the two writings of I and II Thessalonians when trying to determine how long the period of longsuffering and patience existed between the admonition against the disorderly of I Thess. 5:14 and II Thess. 3:6) (see study # 86; How Long should we be Longsuffering and Patient with the Disorderly?).

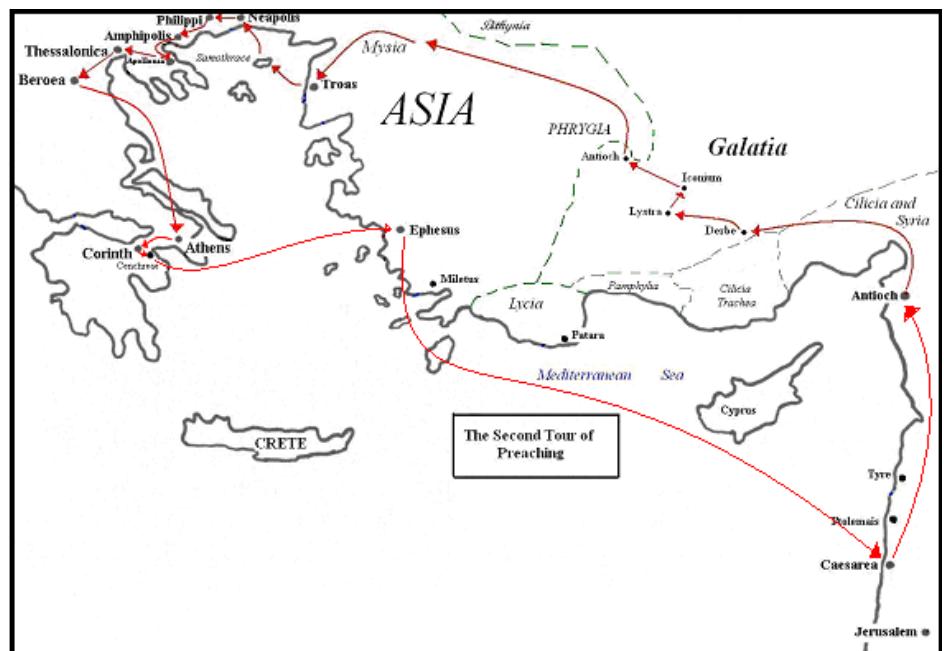
III. Paul is brought before Gallio (18:12-17):

- A. *“But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment-seat, saying, This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law”* (18:12-13).
 1. Gallio was proconsul of Achaia at this time... “an inscription from Delphi makes it probable that he acceded to the office of proconsul of Achaia AD 52” (ISBE v. 2, pp. 393). Hearing Paul's message and seeing many of the Jews obey the gospel (even high ranking officers in the synagogue) was too much for the staunch Jews that held the Mosaic System as unending.
 2. These contending Jews charge Paul with teaching a worship of God that is contrary to the Mosaic System.
- B. *“But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. And he drove them from the judgment seat”* (18:14-16).
 1. While the matter of Paul preaching a message that the Jews perceived as against the Mosaic system was a serious issue to them Gallio could care less.
 2. Gallio forcefully drives the Jews out of his judgment-seat area.
- C. *“And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things”* (18:17).
 1. No word is given by Luke as to whether Sosthenes is a converted ruler of the synagogue as was Crispus. Sosthenes is mentioned in the very first verse of I Corinthians 1:1 as a faithful brother in Christ. It seems apparent that Sosthenes had been converted and it was the irritated Jews who took him and beat him at the Judgment-seat seeing that Gallio said, *“Look to it yourself.”*
 2. Why wasn't Paul beat?

It may have been that Paul escaped and the mob apprehended whatever Christian convert they could get their hands on.

IV. Paul Completes the Second Tour of Preaching (18:18-22):

- A. *“And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila: having shorn his head in Cenchreae; for he had a vow”* (18:18).



1. After Paul's one and a half years in Corinth he takes "*his leave of the brethren.*" Paul determines to travel back to Antioch of Syria where he had begun his journey. Paul leaves Corinth with Priscilla and Aquila and apparently leaves Timothy and Silas in the city to continue preaching (Luke is still at Philippi).
 2. Cenchreae was a town of only about two miles east of Corinth located at the coast of the isthmus and Aegean Sea. Paul apparently preaches the gospel here and establishes a church before leaving for Ephesus (see Rom. 16:1 – Phoebe was a member of this church).
 3. Before setting sail for Syria Paul shaves his head due to a vow he had made. The shaving of the head may indicate a Nazirite vow in which one purposes to dedicate themselves to the service of God. "Vow making was of some importance in both personal piety and corporate worship during every period of Israelite history" (ISBE v. 4, pp. 998).
- B. "*And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him to abide a longer time, he consented not; but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you if God will, he set sail from Ephesus*" (18:19-21).
1. Paul, Priscilla, and Aquilla leave Cenchreae and travel approximately 200 miles by ship across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus. Once in Ephesus the Apostle Paul begins to immediately preach the gospel in the synagogues. Though his stay was not long a church is established and he leaves behind Priscilla and Aquilla that they may edify the saints and preach to the lost.
 2. The brethren desired Paul to stay a while longer; however, he was determined to hurry back to Antioch. Paul tells the Ephesians that if it be the Lord's will he would return to them.
- C. "*And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch*" (18:22).
1. Paul travels through the Mediterranean Sea approximately 500 miles and lands in Caesarea where a church had already been established. Philip had previously been preaching in Caesarea and no doubt a church had been established there (see Acts 8:40).
 2. After visiting the brethren at Caesarea Paul travels north to Antioch (about a 250 mile trek north). Upon arrival in Antioch Paul probably rehearsed all that had transpired in his second tour of preaching as he did after the first tour – see Acts 14:26-27).

III. Paul begins the third Tour of Preaching Alone (53 AD) (18:23-28):

- A. "*And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples*" (18:23).
1. "*Some time there*" is not defined. Let us consider some dates:
 - a. Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus was the fourth Roman emperor reigning from AD 41 to AD 54 (see notes at Acts 11:28). Herod Agrippa I (10? BC - AD 44), last king of Judea (AD 41-44 had James killed at Acts 12:2 (no later than AD 44 when he was struck dead by the Lord / see Acts 12:23).
 - b. Acts 13:1 we find Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark beginning the first tour of preaching (the date had to be near the AD 44 mark).
 - c. The next hint at a date is given at Acts 18:1-2 / i.e., AD 51 (secular history reveals Claudius removing the Jews from Rome at this date). At this time Paul was well into his second tour of preaching. If we take the difference between AD 44 and 51 (i.e., 7 years) and divide it by two (just for the sake of trying to narrow down the dates as close as possible) we come up with 3.5 to 4 years. Let us thereby say that at the year AD 48 Paul and Barnabas end the first tour of preaching. The events of Acts 15 (i.e., the Jerusalem Conference) may have taken as long as two years. Paul would thereby begin his second tour at 50 AD.
 - d. If Paul had written the Galatian letter from Corinth during his first stay there and second tour of preaching that date would likely be about 51 or 52 AD (recalling that it would take some time to get to Corinth and then he stayed there for one and a half years [see Acts 18:11]).
 - e. This being the case it would have been approximately three years since the Galatians had heard the truth and digressed away from it. These three years Paul refers to as a "*quick*" time for them to be turning to a "*different gospel*" (see Gal. 1:6) (see study # 103; Apostasy).

2. The reason we take the time to examine these ideas is that it seems odd that Paul did not stay long in Antioch of Syria. He immediately embarks upon a third tour going through Galatia to further *“establish all the disciples.”* If Paul begins his third tour during the year AD 53 it is likely that only one year had elapsed since he had written the Galatian letter. He would have been very anxious to see how the brethren were doing and to further edify them (see study # 65; Edification) (see also I Thess. 3:1-3).
 3. The dates for the third tour of preaching would be 53 AD to 58 AD. Paul travels to Ephesus and remains there three years (see Acts 19:10; 20:31). Paul travels through Macedonia and remains at Corinth for three months (see Acts 20:3). Paul travels back through Macedonia with the funds for the needy saints in Jerusalem (see Rom. 15:25-28). Felix was the Roman Procurator from 52 to 60 AD (see Acts 23:22-24). Paul remains in a Roman prison for two years (i.e., the last two years of Felix’s governorship – see Acts 24:27). The Third tour must have thereby ended by no later than 58 AD.
- B. *“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures”* (18:24).
1. Alexandria is located in the northern section of Egypt (i.e., above the Nile Delta). “Alexandria in Egypt was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC after he had wrested Egypt from Persian control” (ISBE v. I, pp. 89). Alexandria remained under control of the Macedonians and ruled by the Ptolemies until 30 BC when it came under the power of Rome (Cleopatra VII takes her own life rather than going into Roman prisons and thus ends the Ptolemies rule of Alexandria). The Poseidon, the temple of the god of the sea, was in Alexandria as was the great library known at that time as the largest in the world. Ptolemy (ruled 323-305), a Macedonian general under Alexander the Great, took over the Macedonians after Alexander’s death and made Alexandria his capital city. Ptolemy had conquered Palestine during this time and exiled many Jews to Alexandria. By the time Rome took control of Alexandria the Jews were well established in the city. It is likely that the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 had learned of Jehovah by the Jews there. Apollos was no doubt a Jew whose ancestry could be traced back to those exiled during the days of Macedonian rule (a few hundred years before Apollos was born).
 2. Luke tells us that Apollos was an *“eloquent”* (*logios*) = “gifted with learning or eloquence” (Moulton 249). Thayer tells us the word means “learned, a man of letters, skilled in literature and the arts; versed in history and antiquities” (380). Apparently Apollos was an educated man who was skilled in speaking.
 3. The **third** trait (**first two** being that he was a Jew of Alexandria and eloquent) of Apollos was that he was *“mighty in the scriptures.”* The word *“mighty”* (*dunatos*) = “able, having power, powerful, mighty, to be able” (Moulton 108). Apollos was not known as a man of physical might but one who was mighty (very capable) of expounding to the public the things of God’s laws (i.e., the scriptures).
 4. Apollos comes to Ephesus in the year 51 AD. Remember, Paul had left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus (see Acts 18:19ff).
- C. *“This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John”* (18:25).
1. The **fourth** bit of information regarding Apollos was that he *“had been instructed in the way of the Lord.”* Those who had heard the message of John regarding Jesus had taken their message to Alexandria and so Apollos learned of Christ.
 2. The **fifth** trait of Apollos was that he was *“fervent in spirit.”* To be *“fervent”* (*zeo*) = “to be fervent, zealous, ardent [strong enthusiasm, passionate, emotion, desire, devotion, fervent]” (Moulton 181). Apollos was excited and very enthusiastic about spirituality.
 3. The **sixth** thing we know of Apollos is that apparently disciples of John the Baptist had found their way to Alexandria and instructed the Jews about Jesus. Apollos had been taught about Jesus and *“spoke accurately the things concerning Jesus.”* Apollos could ably prove, by use of the scriptures, the prophecies regarding the coming of Jesus Christ.
 4. There does not appear to be many deficiencies with Apollos; however, he only knew of *“the baptism of John”* (**seventh** bit of information regarding Apollos). John’s baptism was a baptism of

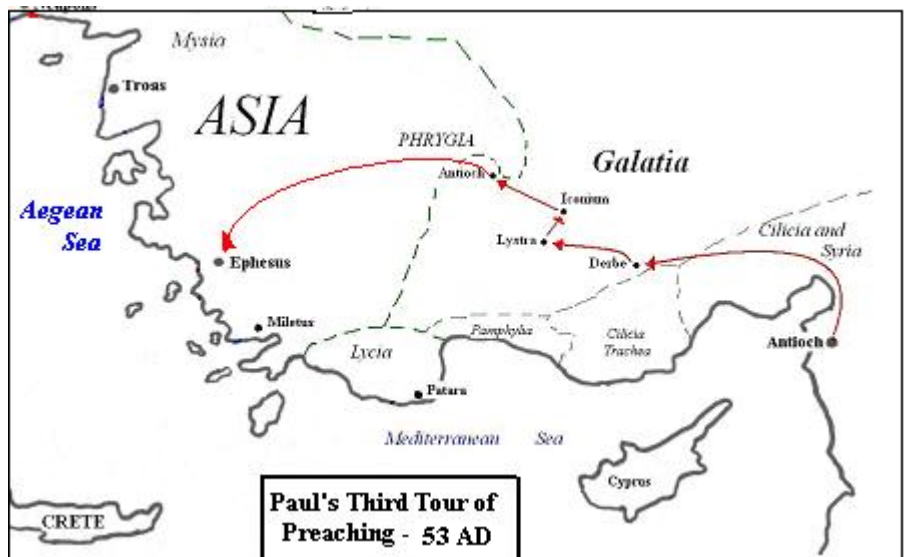
repentance rather than a baptism for the remission of sins because at the time of John's preaching Christ had not yet been crucified for the sins of man (see Mk. 1:4; Acts 13:24; 19:4). Apollos, though mighty and zealous for God, needed to be taught more accurately.

- D. *“and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately”* (18:26).
1. Apollos' zeal for God and man's salvation is depicted in that he spoke *“boldly,”* as Paul, in the synagogue of the Jews. The **eighth** trait of Apollos was that he showed no fear or favor of men when it came to men's souls.
 2. Again, we note that Pricilla and Aquila had been left in Ephesus by Paul to do this very work (i.e., teach the lost and edify the saints).
 3. Apollos' message was lacking in accuracy in that he knew only the baptism of John. Pricilla and Aquila had to catch Apollos up to the events of Calvary where Christ lost his life for man's redemption. Apollos would have been taught that man needed to be baptized not only in repentance but that they would receive the remission of their sins upon their hearing, believing, confessing, and repentance. The **ninth** trait of Apollos is that he was apparently a humble man who received the accurate teachings of Pricilla and Aquila (as is inferred in the next few verses). Apollos, being a highly educated and enthusiastic man, could have easily let pride stand in his way and reject any further teaching; however, he rather absorbed all information regarding man's salvation.
- E. *“And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace; for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ”* (18:27-28).
1. Apollos' travels to Achaia are mentioned at I Corinthians 1:12. Obviously Apollos was very influential in his preaching (i.e., the **tenth** trait of Apollos / I Cor. 1:12). The fact that the brethren of Ephesus wrote a letter to the churches of Achaia to *“receive”* Apollos necessarily infers that he not only heard the truth but believed it, confessed the name of Christ, repented and was baptized for the remission of his sins (see Acts 19:1-5 for proof).
 2. The **eleventh** and **twelfth** identification of Apollos was that he spent his time traveling about **preaching** to the lost and **debating** the Jews regarding the identity of Christ. Note the word *“confuted”* (*diakatelegchomai*) = “to maintain discussion strenuously and thoroughly” (Moulton 91). Apollos strenuously showed the public that Jesus was the Christ.
 3. Note that it was an obviously practice of brethren to write letters about the faithfulness of brothers who were moving from one city to the next. Churches would need to know whether to receive these new people as faithful or threatening. The word *“receive”* (*apodechomai*) = “to welcome, receive, embrace, accept with satisfaction” (Moulton 41). No such reception could possibly take place with those who have rejected the law of Christ (see II Jn. 9-11) (see study # 87; How to Receive New People into a Church).

Chapter 19

I. Paul comes to Ephesus for the Second Time (~ AD 53) (19:1-7):

- A. *“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples:”* (19:1).



1. We last read of Paul traveling through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia to edify the saints (they had been infected with the false doctrines mentioned at Acts 15:1ff).
 2. Paul enters the city of Ephesus, for the second time, at 53 AD.
 3. Note that Apollos is now in Corinth working (we assume that Silas and Timothy have either remained there or have gone back up into Macedonia to preach to the churches in Thessalonica and Beroea. Remember, Luke remains in Philippi, Priscilla and Aquilla in Ephesus, the other apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and Philip in Caesarea). The gospel message is spreading like a wildfire.
- B. *“and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John’s baptism”* (19:2-3).
1. Paul’s first conversation in Ephesus is with twelve men who had received the baptism of John. As we examined above, in the case of Apollos, John had only preached the baptism of repentance. Once Christ died on the cross and shed his blood for the remission of man’s sins true redemption was available to all. Paul thereby asks these men, *“Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?”* This question infers that Paul had spoke to these men about the salvation of their souls. Paul obviously had not only spoken to these twelve men about Jesus but also about baptism. Paul draws a connection between baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit. The men obviously acknowledge their baptism in that they tell Paul that they had *“believed”* (see all *“believe”* passages in this study that infer baptism). When the men reply to Paul that they had not *“received the Holy Spirit when they believed”* Paul asks, *“What then were ye baptized?”* They were baptized; however, their baptism did not result in their having *“received the Holy Spirit.”* The word *“receive”* (*lambano*) = “to take in hand, to get, to give metal reception to, to take” (Moulton 246). Friberg tells us that the Greek verb *lambano* is in the **aorist tense** denoting past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action (Friberg 433). Paul’s question is thereby did you receive the Holy Spirit when you were baptized some time back? Our burden is to understand what it means to receive the Holy Spirit when baptized.
 2. Let us recall some facts we have previously learned in this study regarding the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is **given** to those who obey God’s word (Acts 5:32), seek out God’s help through His word (Lk. 11:10, 13), and are guided by His word (Rom. 8 and I Jn. 4:13). Those who are given the Holy Spirit are those who receive the word of God as truth and they apply His principles and laws in their lives (see Jn. 14:15-17; **Acts 15:5-9**; II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; I Thess. 4:7-8; Heb. 6:4-5). While the Holy Spirit is not the Word of God, He is nonetheless metonymically equivalent to the word of God much like the name of Christ is at Colossians 1:25-27. Paul’s question to these twelve men who had received John’s baptism is thereby, “Did you hear the gospel message of Jesus Christ being crucified so that by His blood you may be forgiven of your sins? Have you obeyed the gospel by being baptized for the remission of your sins? Are you now guided by the word of God in your lives? The same reception of the Holy Spirit occurred on Pentecost when those who were baptized received the *“gift of the Holy Spirit”* (i.e., they were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins – The Holy Spirit’s gift to those who heed the call of the gospel [see Acts 2:39]). Obviously these twelve men had not done so. They had only been baptized into John’s baptism of repentance. The Nestle and Marshal Interlinear Greek – English NT gives the literal translation of Paul’s question as follows: *“If Spirit Holy ye received believing? And they said to him: But not if Spirit Holy there is we heard.”* The obvious conclusion is that *“receiving the Holy Spirit”* is the obtaining of the forgiveness of one’s sins through obedience to the gospel message. These twelve men did not receive the Holy Spirit in that they had only been taught partial truths about Christ and the remission of sins (like Apollos) (see study # 88; Receiving the Holy Spirit).
- C. *“And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus”* (19:4-5).
1. These twelve men, like Apollos, had only heard part of the truth. The Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, now revealed the whole truth of Christ and his saving blood. Now that they have heard the whole truth they realize that they needed to be re-baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). This verse proves the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins. If any baptism

was ok then why would the Holy Spirit direct them, through truth, to be baptized again? (See study # 16).

2. Many today need the same “re-baptism” because they have only heard partial truths in times past that lead to their baptism. Some are baptized to become a part of a church, others are baptized in the wrong manner; i.e., they were sprinkled and still some were baptized as infants who could in no way hear, believe, confess Christ name, repent of sins, and make the personal decision to be baptized and remain faithful.
 3. Note that man is to be baptized, “*in the name of the Lord Jesus.*” Paul associates reception of the Holy Spirit with being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is by Christ authority and sacrifice alone that man receives the forgiveness of their sins. No amount of money (see Psalms 49 all), intellect (Jer. 8:8), or personal religious opinions (II Cor. 1:12) may save a man from the consequences of sin.
- D. “*And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And they were in all about twelve men*” (19:6-7).
1. We must note that there is a distinction between these twelve men “*receiving the Holy Spirit*” (i.e., the gospel message that directs man to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins) and the Holy Spirit coming upon them through the laying on of Paul’s hands so that they could speak in tongues and prophecy.
 2. Remember that when the apostles were immersed in the Holy Spirit they received power to speak in tongues (see Acts 1:5, 8, 2:1ff). The Apostle Peter had exclaimed to the Jews, in regards to Cornelius and his household obeying the gospel, that they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit just as all the other Apostles had in the beginning (i.e., Day of Pentecost) (see Acts 11:15-17). This “*baptism of the Holy Spirit*” enabled the Gentiles of Cornelius and his house to speak in tongues (see Acts 10:46). Obviously, people were not automatically “*baptized in the Holy Spirit*” when they were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. An example of this thought is found in Acts 8. When the Samaritans were baptized for the remission of their sins they were not immediately endowed with spiritual and miraculous gifts (Acts 8:18). The Samaritans had only “*received the word of God*” (Acts 8:14) which I aver is receiving the Holy Spirit and being baptized for the remission of sins as proved above. The only way others were immersed in the Spirit and given the divine ability to perform miracles was for the Apostles to lay their hands upon them and give them these abilities (see Acts 8:14-17). There are thereby two issues under consideration. The twelve men’s baptism for the remission of sins (reception of the Holy Spirit) and their being given the ability to perform miracles.

II. Paul Preaches in Ephesus (19:8-11):

- A. “*And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God*” (19:8).
1. As was Paul’s custom (and apparently that which brought him much success in preaching the gospel and converting men’s souls) he went directly to the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months.
 2. Paul reasoned with and persuaded the Jews and Gentiles that Jesus was the Christ and that His Kingdom (the kingdom of God) had been established. No doubt Paul preached the terms of admission into God’s kingdom as had done in every other case.
- B. “*But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus*” (19:9).
1. Upon hearing truth “*some were hardened*” (*skleruno*) = “to put on a stubborn frame, become obdurate [hardened in wrongdoing or wickedness... not giving in to persuasion / AHD 856]” (Moulton 369). While Paul reasoned from the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ and that his kingdom had been established some did not “give in to persuasion.” This hardened (stubborn rejection of truth so that one may continue in wrongdoing) is directly associated with “*disobedience.*” This is an interesting way of viewing a hard heart. The point is that the evidence of Christ and his Kingdom is so clear that one is considered disobedient by not accepting the obvious truths regarding them (see study # 47). Paul had apparently showed, by the scriptures, the proof that Jesus was the Christ yet the hard hearted simply wanted no part of truth. Exodus 10:1-3

defines the hardened heart as one who hears God's commands yet refuses to humble themselves (i.e., subject themselves to God in obedience). God's command was not what Pharaoh wanted to do and likewise God's commands are not what many hard hearted people want today out of religion. The proof of Christ and his kingdom were undeniable; however, some of the Ephesians did not want a Savior. They were so content with their own ways that they spoke "*evil of the Way*" (i.e., Christianity).

2. Paul, seeing their hardened and disobedient hearts, turned away from these people having separated the disciples from them and continued his "*reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.*" No doubt there were some who heard that were like the Athenians in that they were curious about what Paul was preaching and wanted to hear more (see Acts 18:32) (see study # 89).
 3. The Greek word for "*school*" or "hall" is *schole* = "Originally this word meant 'leisure' but here in Acts 19:9 it denotes a lecture hall or school room where teachers and pupils could come together for instruction and discussion... Tyrannus, the name of an Ephesian in whose hall Paul conducted discussions day by day, is otherwise unknown... he may have been a Jew and his hall his own private synagogue, which he offered to Paul for his use. Or he may have been a Greek – as his name suggests – who owned a place for lecture and discussion that Paul rented (or he may have permitted Paul to use it for free" (ISBE v. 4, pp. 932).
- C. "*And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks*" (19:10).
1. Paul spends 3 months reasoning in the synagogue, 2 years preaching in the school of Tyrannus, and apparently 9 additional months in various places of Asia preaching. Paul's entire time in Ephesus is marked at three years (see Acts 20:31). If Paul entered Ephesus at AD 53 then he exited AD 56.
 2. During these three years Paul writes the first epistle to the Corinthians (see I Cor. 16:8). The date of I Corinthians is toward the end of Paul's stay in Ephesus (AD 56 or 57); i.e., he was waiting unto the Day of Pentecost to leave due to many open doors of opportunity to preach (see I Cor. 16:8). It is apparent that the work was anything but leisurely. Paul mentions the many adversaries at I Cor. 16:8.

III. Paul Performs Miracles in Ephesus (19:11-20):

- A. "*And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out*" (19:11-12).
1. That which was "*special*" about Paul's miracles is that he did not even need to be in the presence of the diseased or person with an evil spirit. People simply took an apron or handkerchief of Paul's to the sick and demon possessed and these things would miraculously go away.
 2. These miracles were not performed because Paul was a "holy man" but rather so that the message he preached would be confirmed as of divine origin (see Mark 16:20) and that mercy would be extended to those in need (Matt. 14:14) (see study # 21).
- B. "*But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them that had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches*" (19:13).
1. The word "*strolling*" (*perierchomai*) = "To go round, go about like a beggar; like a canvasser" (LS 626). These strolling Jews were identified as "*exorcists*" (*ezorkistes*) = "one who by various kinds of incantations, etc., pretended to expel demons" (Moulton 147). The purpose of expelling demons by these pretenders who used incantations may have been to gain money or prestige among their peers.
 2. The purpose of expelling demons and performing any miracles, for that matter, was to confirm truth and exercise compassion. These men's objective was neither. Men who do not have faith in Jesus are not recognized by Jesus.
- C. "*And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded*" (19:14-16).

1. Apparently these seven sons of Sceva, the chief priest, had witnessed Paul's success in casting out demons in the name of Jesus Christ. These men erroneously conclude that they can do the same without having obeyed the gospel and having Paul lay his hands upon them to give them these gifts.
 2. When they attempt to use Jesus and Paul's name the demon recognizes the power of Jesus and Paul; however, these sinful men had no such recognition. They were likened unto the demon in respect to fellowship with God (i.e., both rejected). The demon confesses a faith and knowledge of Jesus and Paul yet these seven men were just like the demon (see James 2:19). The demon thereby leaps upon these seven sons, overpowers them, and causes them to run out of the house wounded and naked. The word "both" may include the man that the evil spirit was already in and the seven sons of Sceva.
- D. *"And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. And not a few of them that practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed"* (19:17-20).
1. Word of a demon overpowering one who used Jesus and Paul's name without being authorized to do so spread quickly. The event illustrated to the Ephesians that only the obedient are recognized by God and even evil spirits (see study # 90; Demonic Spirits). The result of such events magnified the name of Jesus in the minds of all who heard. A similar incident occurred in Acts 5 regarding Ananias and Sapphira. When this husband and wife were struck dead by God for lying *"great fear came upon all that heard it"* (Acts 5:5).
 2. The twofold results of such events are revealed:
 - a. First, many people were seeing the necessity of obeying the gospel and be forgiven of their sins. The church and kingdom of God was growing.
 - b. Secondly, many Christians who had been involved in magical arts brought their books of spells to the church, confessed their error, and burned the books which were pricey (i.e., 50,000 pieces of silver). The word of God grew mightily within the hearts of the faithful and those who were hearing and believing for the first time.

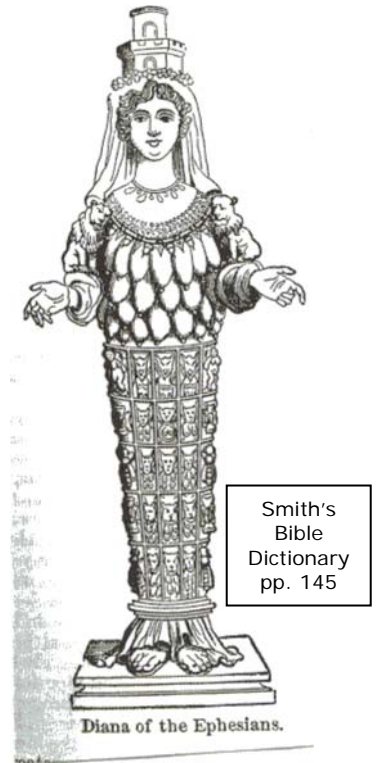
IV. **Luke Previews Paul's Travel Plans (19:21-22):**

- A. *"Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome"* (19:21).
1. Apparently during this period of time, another famine (Cf. the first one mentioned in Acts 11:27ff) had struck the region of Palestine (Cf. Rom. 15:24-28). Paul mentions his itinerary through Macedonia and Achaia so that he may collect funds for the needy brethren in Jerusalem (I Cor. 16:1-3; II Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15:24ff).
 2. Paul's earnest desire to travel to Rome now comes to view (see also Rom. 1:10-12; 15:23ff).
- B. *"And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while"* (19:22).
1. Before Paul leaves Ephesus; however, he sends Timothy and Erastus on to Macedonia. Their purpose was likely threefold:
 - a. Edify the saints (I Cor. 4:17).
 - b. Encourage the brethren to lay by in store upon the first day of the week a collection for the needy saints of Judea (I Cor. 16:1-3; II Cor. 9:1-8).
 - c. Thirdly, it is likely that Timothy delivers the second epistle to the Corinthians during the year 56 AD.
 2. Notice that one year later (57 AD) Paul writes the second letter to the Corinthians (see II Cor. 9:2; i.e., one year after first epistle was delivered – see notes at Acts 20:1-3). While we have lost track of Timothy and Silas after Paul left Corinth during his second tour of preaching we now find that Timothy had, at some point, rejoined Paul in Ephesus. Where Silas is at this point is unknown.

V. **Paul's Encounter with Demetrius the Silversmith (19:23-41):**

A. *“And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth”* (19:23-25).

1. The Demetrius of Ephesus was a *“silversmith, who made shrines of Diana.”* A *“shrine”* (*naos*) = “a dwelling; the dwelling of a deity, a temple... a model of a temple, a shrine (Moulton 275). Demetrius made his living selling these shrines in Ephesus.
2. Diana was identified as the Greek goddess Artemis by the Romans. She was a hideous multi-breasted woman that supposedly fell from the heavens. A temple was built to her and became known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Diana was known as, “The Greek goddess of wild animals, wild nature, chastity, and childbirth, and the Ephesian goddess of fertility, superficially with little but the name in common... One month every year was entirely devoted to impressive ceremonies in honor of Artemis. No work was done during this month, and there were athletic games at the Stadium, plays at the Theater, and concerts at the Odeon” (ISBE v. 1, pp. 307). It is very likely that this one-month devoted to Diana had now come and all Ephesus was participating in the festivities. This was a very advantageous time to sell model temples of Diana as souvenirs and it was also a great time to preach the gospel. The two ideas clashed on this day.
3. Paul’s preaching against idolatry meant broadcasting the message of mono-theology. Those who accepted the gospel message left off following Diana and thereby did damage to Demetrius’ business. The more people were being converted to Christianity the less people were buying the shrines. Demetrius obviously contracted out some of his work to those of common trade. When Demetrius’ business suffered his contractors also suffered. These men were not happy with Paul’s preaching because it caused them to lose part of their wealth.



B. *“And ye see and hear; that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they are not gods, that are made with hands: and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worships”* (19:26-27).

1. Demetrius calls together his contractors and fellow shrine makers and lays out the potential danger that Paul’s preaching poses not only to their wallets but also to Diana. Gospel preaching could cause more and more people to reject Diana as a deity and leave off worshipping her at her temple.
2. Paul’s message that gods like Diana are a fraud had reached the ears of *“all Asia.”*

C. *“And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel”* (19:28-29).

1. News of possible job losses and the tearing down of a religion that Ephesus was known for was too much for calm spirits. A city filled with confusion and riot resulted.
2. The angered and confused crowd *“seizes Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel”* and bring them to the theatre for questioning.
 - a. Apparently Gaius and Aristarchus had accompanied Paul, Priscilla and Aquila from Cenchrea of Achaia to Asia and possibly on to Antioch of Syria and through Galatia with Paul. When Paul met these two men is obvious. Paul met them while traveling through Macedonia. They could have began traveling with Paul as early as Paul’s visit to Neapolis (Philippi, Thessalonica, Amphipolis, Appolonia, or Berea).
 - b. This Gaius could not have been the Gaius of I Corinthians 1:14 due to the fact that he was from Macedonia rather than Corinth of Achaia. There is another traveling companion of

- Paul's named Gaius at Acts 20:4 yet this is not the same one here either due to that Gaius being from Derbe of Galatia. Apparently Gaius (the name of previous Roman Emperors / Augustus and Germanicus) was a very popular name.
- c. Aristarchus' home town is pinpointed at Thessalonica (see Acts 20:4). The book of Acts will mention his name a few more times in relation to traveling with Paul. Aristarchus eventually travels to Rome with Paul and is his fellow prisoner (Acts 27:2; Col. 4:10; Philemon 1:24).
- D. *“And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain also of the Asiarchs, being his friends, sent unto him and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre”* (19:30-31).
1. Once Paul learned that his brothers in Christ, Gaius and Aristarchus, had been seized and drug to the theatre for questioning he desired to enter and possibly defend them.
 2. The disciples of Ephesus (the newly converted Christians) would not permit Paul to enter the theatre. Paul's Asiarch friends also pleaded with him not to enter the theatre (apparently they knew of the danger). The *“Asiarchs”* “are officers having charge of festivals in the Roman province of Asia” (Cf. footnotes in the 1901 ASV bible).
- E. *“Some therefore cried one thing and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together”* (19:32).
1. The *“assembly”* was one of confusion. The whole city had been moved to agitation and many of them did not even know why they were there. This illustrates the danger of a mob mentality. Many participate in riots and mobs simply out of a desire to be disorderly and participate in the revelry.
 2. Notice the use of the word *“assembly”* (*ekklesia*). This is the same Greek word translated *“church”* at Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11 etc. The word simply means a gathering of people for a specified purpose. The saints were not gathered at this theatre on this occasion but rather a disorderly and rioting people.
- F. *“And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defense unto the people. But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And when the town clerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knows not that the city the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. For ye have brought hither these men, who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess”* (19:33-37).
1. The confused and rioting crowd brought Alexander forward as a spokesman. The moment; however, the predominately Gentile crowd saw that he was a Jew they seem to automatically associate him with *“the way”* and begin to shout, *“Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”* This went on for the next two hours.
 2. The *“town clerk”* eventually steps forward to soothe the mob. A *“town clerk”* (*grammateus*) = “The city secretary, recorder, to whose office belonged the superintendence of the archives, the drawing up of official decrees, and the reading of them in public assemblies of the people” (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary pp. 1299).
 3. The clerks speech:
 - a. The clerk begins his speech by appeasing the crowd with words that signify the greatness and widely known name of the Diana and her temple (see explanation of Diana falling from the heavens or Jupiter at Acts 19:23-25 notes above).
 - b. Secondly, the clerk reasons with the crowd saying that such a reputation cannot be *“gainsaid”* by anyone. To *“gainsaid”* (*anantirrhotos*) = “not to be contradicted, **indisputable**, without gainsaying” (Moulton 24).
 - c. The clerk's point is that though Paul has preached that Diana is no god the real fact of the matter is that the world knows better. Diana's deity is indisputable and cannot be contradicted. This being the case the clerk warns the mob to be quiet and not do anything rash with these two men (Gaius and Aristarchus) that they would latter regret. Gaius and Aristarchus had not robbed the temple of Diana and neither had they been convicted as one

who blasphemed “*our goddess.*” Paul is the only one convicted of such crimes against Diana.

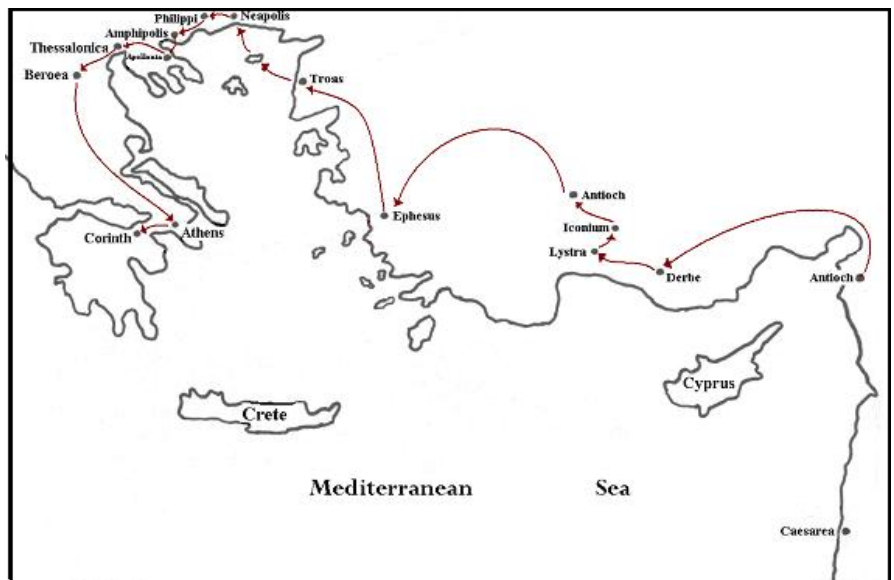
- G. *“If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly”* (19:38-39).
1. The town clerk’s plea was that the matter be handled in a lawful manner rather than inciting riots and unruly behavior toward men without a proper trial.
 2. The Ephesians ought to bring the matter before the Roman proconsuls of Asia.
- H. *“For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day’s riot, there being no cause for it: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly”* (19:40-41).
1. The town clerk speaks words of wisdom in relationship to the mob’s current direction of riot. Those who continue rioting risk going to the Roman courts themselves and being accused of inciting chaos and thereby penalized.
 2. The speech had its desired effect in that the mob dispersed and apparently Gaius and Aristarchus were released.

Chapter 20

I. Paul Leaves Ephesus and Travels to Macedonia, Greece, and back to Asia (20:1-12):

- A. *“And after the uproar ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. And when he had spent three months there, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia”* (20:1-3).

1. Paul leaves Ephesus at about 57 AD. Apparently the persecutions in Asia became so intense that he had no recourse but to leave for the time being (see II Cor. 1:8-10).
2. Paul travels northward to the city of Troas where he awaited the arrival of Titus (Cf. II Cor. 2:12-13). Titus was delayed for some unknown reason and Paul proceeds across

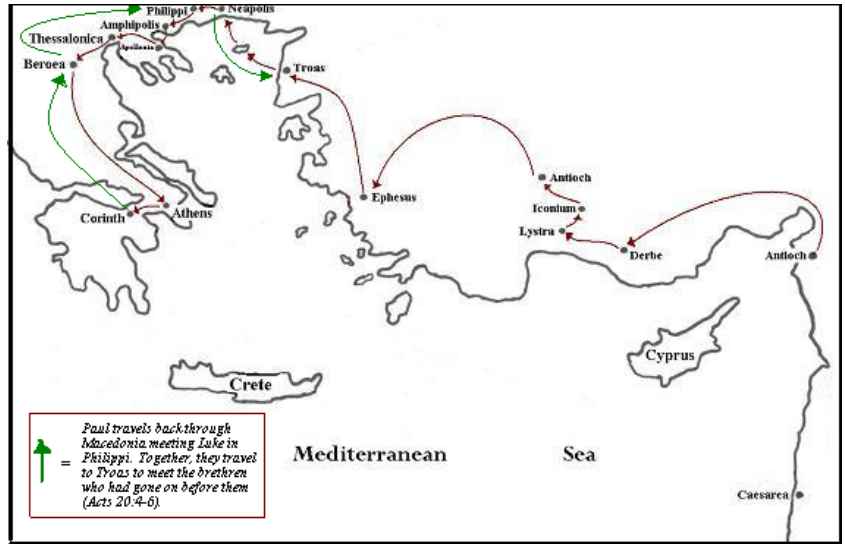


- the Aegean Sea to Macedonia without him. It is most probable that Titus met Paul in Philippi or Thessalonica (Cf. II Cor. 7:5-7). We had noted at Acts 19:22 that it would have been one year after Paul wrote I Corinthians that he wrote II Corinthians (see II Cor. 9:2). This one year time frame would have placed Paul at either Troas, Philippi, or Thessalonica (see study # 86).
3. It seems interesting that when examining the time frame between I and II Thessalonians we learn lessons on longsuffering and patience while dealing with the disorderly. The Thessalonian letters reveal a failure of disorderly brethren to repent and thereby the saints were called upon to withdraw from these men and women. The two letters written to the Corinthians are similar. I Corinthians 5:1ff reveals a disorderly brother whom Paul exposed and commanded that the

brethren withdraw from. One year later, at the writing of II Corinthians, we find that the withdrawal and delivering of that person's soul to Satan had its desired effect; i.e., he repented (see I Cor. 5:1ff and II Cor. 2:5-8) (see study # 86).

4. Paul then travels through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica and from Thessalonica to Berea then to Athens and Corinth (Achaia or Greece). The name "*Greece*" "occurs only once in the NT (Acts 20:2, Gk. *Hellas*) where it is distinguished from Macedonia; in this passage it is used as a popular synonym for Achaia, the Roman name of the territory" (ISBE, v. 2, pp. 567). Every city where a church existed he exhorted them and collected the funds for the needy saints in Jerusalem (Again, note II Cor. 9:1-8; Rom. 15:24ff).
5. Paul remained in Corinth for three months (Acts 20:3). It is most probable that during this three month time he wrote the epistle to the Romans (58 AD) (Rom. 15:25; 16:1).

B. "*And there accompanied him as far as Asia, Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days*" (20:4-6).



1. Having heard of a plot against his life, Paul determines to travel back through Macedonia. The above mentioned seven brethren were apparently working closely with Paul and traveling with him. There was one Berean, two Thessalonians, two of Derbe, and two of Asia. These seven brethren travel ahead of Paul to Troas where they had planned to meet.
2. Notice the return of Luke. Our narrator, once again, brings himself modestly into the picture by using the plural pronoun "us" and "we." Luke was last mentioned at Acts 16 when Paul, Timothy, and Silas had left him in Philippi on the second tour of preaching about 51 AD. The current year is 58 AD. Luke had remained in Philippi for **seven years** edifying the saints and preaching the gospel.

C. "*And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight*" (20:7).

1. The "*first day of the week*" is for the first time mentioned in the book of Acts. The disciples were already in the practice of assembling on the "*first day of the week*" at the time of this writing (see I Cor. 16:2). The importance of this verse cannot be overestimated. It imposes an Apostolic example that explains the authority the church has to assemble on the first day of the week (i.e., Sunday). If the first day of the week was the day that the early church assembled we have no right to discard this example. This was the obvious day of the week that the church assemble to worship God by means of partaking of the LS, singing, praying, preaching, and giving of our means that the work of the church may continue. Seeing that there is a first day of every week it is apparent that the early church was in the practice of assembling every first day of the week. When God commanded Israel to keep the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week) it was done every Sabbath (see Ex. 20:8-11) (see study # 25; Bible Authority / Example and # 31).
2. Notice that Luke mentions two things that occurred at the weekly meeting:
 - a. The disciples assembled to "*break bread.*" To "*break*" (*klasai*) = "to break bread; with figurative reference to the violent death of Christ – I Cor. 11:24" (Moulton 232). The word

“bread” (*arton*) = “bread; a loaf or thin cake of bread” (Moulton 53). The term “*break bread*” is used to indicate both a common meal (Acts 2:46) and the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:26). Context must determine the meaning: The Apostle Paul reveals to the Corinthians the act of partaking of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week. Paul told them that when they assembled they were to partake of this memorial to remember the body and blood of Christ. Paul tells the Corinthians that the purpose of their assembly was not for partaking of a common meal together. The Corinthians had homes to do this in (see I Cor. 11:20ff). If their assembly was not to eat a common meal then what could Luke be referring to at Acts 20:7 when he said the church came together to “*break bread*?” The conclusion is simple. The saints came together and partook of the Lord’s Supper.

- b. Secondly, Luke reveals preaching to be taking place at the time of assembly. Paul preached a very lengthy sermon in Troas (i.e., till midnight).
- D. *“And there were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him”* (20:8-10).
 - 1. A young man by the name of Eutychus had been listening to Paul’s sermon; however, the longer it went on the sleepier he became. Eutychus fell hard asleep and eventually falls out of a window from the third story while Paul is preaching and he died.
 - 2. Paul hurriedly goes to the young man, falls upon him, and restores his life to him.
- E. *“And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted”* (20:11-12).
 - 1. The word “*broken*” (*klasas*) is a Greek verb in the aorist tense which denotes past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action (see Friberg 438).
 - 2. The past action of breaking bread was the partaking of the LS (i.e., it had already taken place as Paul raised the dead lad and continued talking with the brethren all night until the break of day).

II. Paul back to Jerusalem but not before meeting with the Ephesian Elders (20:13-38):

- A. *“But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost”* (20:13-16).



- 1. Luke, and the other traveling companions of Paul, took a ship from Troas southward through the Aegean Sea to Assos while Paul decided to travel by land to the city.
- 2. Luke and Paul’s faithful companions meet him at Assos and again take a ship to Mitylene and from Mitylene they sailed to Chios (small islands off the coast of Asia in the Aegean Sea). The travelers

leave Chios and sail southward to Samos and then the next day they sail to Miletus (see map above for details of these travels). Paul avoids Ephesus for three reasons:

- a. Paul knew many people there and was possibly fearful that they may demand that he stay longer.
 - b. Secondly, Paul did not care to stop in Ephesus due to the extremely hostile environment that opposed his very person (see I Cor. 16:9; II Cor. 1:8-10).
 - c. Thirdly, Paul was anxious to get back to Jerusalem with the funds that he had collected from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia for the needy saints.
- B. *“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews; how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (20:17-21).*
1. Instead of going into the city of Ephesus Paul sends for the elders of the church to come to him at Miletus (about a 50 mile trek). Seems like it would have been more time efficient to send for the elders when they were at Samos; however, there was probably a good reason for doing it this way. Remember that the *“elders”* (*presbuteros*) have been identified and discussed at Acts 14:23. These were not just elderly men but men who had attained wise council with their age (see LS 668). These men were to be appointed to this position in the church after meeting divinely revealed qualifications (see I Tim. 3:1ff; Titus 1:5ff).
 2. Paul meets with the Ephesian Elders and reminds them of his conduct while among them:
 - a. Paul had served the Lord *“with all lowliness of mind”* (*tapeinophrosune*) = “humble-minded... lowliness or humility of mind and deportment (conduct or demeanor... the way one conducts or behaves himself), modesty, Acts 20:19; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3” (Moulton 397) (cf. Col. 3:12; I Pet. 5:5) (see study # 51).
 - b. Paul suffered tears and trials at the hands of wicked men termed *“beasts”* (see I Cor. 15:32; II Cor. 1:8-10; 2:4; Phil. 3:18).
 - c. Thirdly, Paul *“shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable.”* To *“shrank not”* (*hupostello*) = “to keep back, suppress, conceal” (Moulton 419). The point is clear. Paul preached without being afraid of men. Some may try to suppress or hold back truths of God’s word out of fear of its consequences to their person; however, Paul showed no such fear of man. Paul delivered the beneficial or profitable message of the cross (see study # 30).
 3. Paul’s teaching revolved around:
 - a. *“Repentance”* and *“faith toward our Lord Jesus.”* Repentance, the idea of purposing in one’s heart to turn away from unlawful living, has been discussed many times already in this study (see Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30). God demands our holiness and so we must purpose in our hearts to live (Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:15-16).
 - b. *“Faith”* has also been discussed in its association of not only a mental ascent to the truth of something but also the consequential obedience that manifest said faith (see Jn. 3:36; Acts 13:38-39; Heb. 11:1-6).
- C. *“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit testifies unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me”* (20:22-23).
1. To be *“bound in the spirit”* is equivalent to saying, “I have purposed within my heart to do this and this...” (See Acts 19:21). Paul had courageously purposed to go to Jerusalem to bring the aid to the needy saints no matter if it meant that he would suffer afflictions at the hands of lawless men.
 2. Paul reveals to the Ephesian elders that nothing will be different in his visit to Jerusalem than any other city he has traveled to. The Holy Spirit has forewarned him that as he preaches afflictions await him everywhere. Jesus had also forewarned Paul of the many things that he must suffer for the cause of Jesus Christ (See Acts 9:16).
 3. The conversation between Paul and the elders indicates their close relationship and earnest desire, on the elder’s part, for Paul’s safety.

- D. *“But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God”* (20:24).
1. Paul had served the Lord with all lowliness of mind never thinking too highly of himself (see Rom. 12:3). Paul will later tell the Philippians, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”* (Phil. 1:20).
 2. Paul’s personal life was not something that he held higher in importance than the souls of people. He was duty bound to preach *“the gospel of the grace of God”* (see Rom. 1:14-16) (see study # 51).
 3. There are many terms that identify divine revelation:
 - a. The **gospel** of Jesus Christ is called *“the gospel of the grace of God”* (Acts 20:24).
 - b. *“The word of God”* (Acts 6:7; 13:5; Rom. 10:17 etc.).
 - c. *“Truth”* (Jn. 8:32; 17:17; II Cor. 6:7, 13:8; Gal. 2:5, 14, 3:1, 5:7; Eph. 1:13 etc.).
 - d. *“Law of Christ”* (Gal. 6:1).
 - e. *“The perfect law of liberty”* (James 1:25; 2:12).
 - f. *“The council of God”* (Acts 20:26).
 - g. *“The word of His grace”* (Acts 20:32).
 - h. *“A law of faith”* (Rom. 3:27).
- E. *“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more”* (20:25).
1. Surely this would have been a shocking and heart breaking statement for the elders of Ephesus to hear. Paul would never see them again. It seems apparent that Paul understood the danger that Jerusalem posed, the places it would take him, and that surely it would bring him to the end of his life.
 2. Those who heard the revelation of God by the mouth of Paul, regarding the Kingdom of God, would no longer see or hear the voice of this prophet and Apostle.
- F. *“Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God”* (20:26-27).
1. Paul comforts the elders by telling them that though they will see his face no more he had fulfilled his divinely called duty to preach and teach the gospel. Paul could confidently proclaim, *“I am pure from the blood of all men.”* A similar statement is found at Acts 18:6. Paul had been preaching to the Jews and Greeks that rejected his message. Paul consequentially states, *“Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean.”*
 - a. This is a statement borrowed from the OT prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel quotes God saying, *“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul”* (Ezek. 3:17-19). (Cf. Ez. 33:1-9). Paul had fulfilled his duty; i.e., he warned the wicked and was thereby *“clean”* (Acts 18:6) and *“pure”* in respect to their sins. Brethren today are to *“warn”* the wicked (i.e., those who reject, are ignorant, take liberties with, teach error, or attempt to change the gospel message are to be warned). When the apostles brought Old Testament teaching into the New Testament they made it a part of the Law of Christ and binding upon Christians. Note that Paul was not an elder in the church but a baptized believer who served as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul told both the Corinthians and Philippians to imitate his every word and action (I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9). Apostolic example equates to individual Christian duty (see study # 85).
 - b. Those today who shrink back in fear when exposing the error of the worldly and erring brethren do so to their own eternal damnation (see II Tim. 1:7-8). It is a fearful responsibility that all Christians have; i.e., to serve as God’s watchmen and warn the wicked of their erring ways.
 2. Paul had never *“shrank back”* (a reiteration from Acts 20:20 where the term was identified as to **suppress** or **conceal**). The Apostle Paul preached *“the whole counsel of God.”* That means preaching every aspect of the word of God and not worrying about whether or not it offends

someone (Cf. Matt. 15:12ff; II Tim. 4:2) (see study # 77). It also entails an approach of respect for the authority of God. Man is not at liberty to preach or live by anything but truth (See II Jn. 9; Jude 1:8). Let us all have the same courage today!

G. *“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the **flock**, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed **the church** of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood”* (20:28).

1. Paul instructs the elders to *“take heed”* (*prosecho*) = “to take care of, provide for... to beware of, guard against” (Moulton 349). The elders were to take care, provide, and guard against danger not only for their own selves but also the *“flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops.”* Notice that these same men whom Paul referred to as *“elders”* at Acts 20:17 are now identified as *“bishops.”* The word *“bishop”* (*episkopos*) = “an inspector, overseer; a watcher, guardian” (Moulton 160). “One who watches over, an overseer, guardian... one set to watch... a bishop” (LS 301). The elders were to guard against false teachers who would not spare the *“flock”* as a wolf that kills (Matt. 7:15ff). It is somewhat interesting that the members of the body of Christ (i.e., **the church**) who are subject to the elder are termed a *“flock.”* The scene is further clarified when Jesus refers to himself as the *“good shepherd”* who lays down his life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11ff). The elders are identified as shepherds who tend the flock of sheep (see I Pet. 5:1-4). When one sheep goes astray they care for it and go after it (see Matt. 18:12-14) (see study # 69).
2. The caring, providing, and guarding of the sheep occurs through the elders *“feeding the church which the Lord purchased with his own blood.”* To *“feed”* (*poimaino*) = “to feed, pasture, tend a flock” (Moulton 333). “To be shepherd... to tend a flock” (LS 652). This Greek word is translated *“pastors”* at Ephesians 4:11. Now we have “Elders, Bishops, and Pastors” all being terms depicting the same office in the church. The Greek word *poimaino* illustrates the work of shepherding the flock of God’s people. Shepherds are active in keeping the flock healthy and safe. Such will occur on the part of the elders by their seeing to it that the sheep are fed properly (i.e., the doctrine of Christ alone) and kept safe against the dangers of this world.
3. Notice that Paul signifies the grand significance and importance of their responsibility to shepherd the flock of God’s people by stating, *“Which he purchased with his own blood.”* The very church that the elders shepherd belongs to the Lord. Those who do not take proper care of that which belongs to the Lord shall have to give answer to the same Lord of lords. Christ shed his blood upon the cross that man would be freed from the consequence of sin. Those who take advantage of that blood sacrifice now belong to Christ. The elders are fearfully caring for that which belongs to Jesus Christ. Those who choose to be elders must understand this grand responsibility! If one of the flock goes astray shall the elder do nothing for that sheep of whom Christ died for and purchased with his own blood? If the flock is being fed poisonous doctrines by a preacher or other member shall the elder do nothing for those whom Christ shed his blood for? God forbid! These men will give answer to God for their work and involvement in the lives of the flock (Heb. 13:17). We ought to all give thanks for qualified men who serve today with such high responsibility in the Lord’s church.

H. *“I know that after my departing grievous **wolves** shall enter in among you, not sparing **the flock**; and from among your own selves shall men arise, **speaking perverse things**, to draw away the disciples after them”* (20:29-30).

1. Paul, as an inspired Apostle of Jesus Christ, foretells of future battles within the church at Ephesus. Paul knew that after he left there would be *“grievous wolves”* enter into the Ephesian church teaching erring doctrines of men and thereby devour many among the flock of God’s people (see Matt. 7:15ff). The scene is a pastoral one. You have sheep and a shepherd who protects and feeds the sheep. The danger posed to the sheep is not only wolves from without but shepherds from within.
2. Paul even predicts that some of the Ephesian elders would begin speaking *“perverse”* things. The word *“perverse”* (*diastrepho*) = “to distort, corrupt, cause to make defection, erroneous” (Moulton 95). Such corrupt and erroneous teaching shall cause many of the disciples of Ephesus to be *“drawn away”* from the truth. The Apostle John wrote of those who had the spirit of antichrist saying, *“These things have I written unto you concerning them that would **lead you astray**”* (I Jn. 2:26). The following that these future elders would gain in their corrupt error would be recognized as a

- faction. The consequence of these future factions would be that many would fall away from the Lord's truths (see I Jn. 2:18-19) (see study # 91; Faction).
- I. *"Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears"* (20:31).
1. To *"watch"* (*gregoreuo*) = "attentive, vigilant, circumspect [heedful of circumstances or consequences], watchful" (Moulton 82). Some believe that only the elders are authorized to "watch and warn" the wicked of their ways; however, the Apostle John, by divine inspiration, tells all the members of the church of Sardis to *"watch"* (i.e., *gregoreuo*) (see Rev. 3:2). Paul instructs the elders to be *"watchful"* because *"grievous wolves"* will not spare the flock and there would even be elders who would speak perverse things to draw away disciples from truth. Here were men who were fearful of the consequences of proclaiming the whole council of God (see Acts 20:27) (see study # 85).
 2. Paul calls to the elder's remembrance that he did not cease, night and day, for three years to *"admonish everyone."* To *"admonish"* (*noutheteo*) = "warn or warning" (Moulton 279). Paul, the elders, and all members of the church are authorized to watch and warn the wicked who would seek to draw away the disciples from the truth with perverted teaching. Here is Apostolic authority (by way of example) to watch and warn the wicked that we be not guilty of the blood of any man (see study # 85).
- J. *"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified"* (20:32).
1. To *"commend"* (Gr. *paratithemai*) one to God is to "to lay or set before... to place by the side of" (Moulton 306). Paul set the elders by the side of God and His *"word of grace."* The elders should never the leave the side of God and His divine revelation (see study # 69).
 2. Two consequences of remaining by God's side and His truths:
 - a. Those who place themselves by the side of God and His Word will be *"built up"* (i.e., edified or strengthened in truth). Said members shall be knowledgeable and able to help not only self but others remain faithful.
 - b. Secondly, those who remain by the side of God and His Word will be *"given the inheritance among all that are sanctified."* God's gifts are conditioned upon our remaining by God's side and with truth. All who are *"sanctified"* do such things. The word *"sanctified"* (*hagiazō*) = separate from common condition and use; pure, righteous, ceremonially or morally; holy... cleanse, purify, sanctify... moral purity" (Moulton 3). Paul identifies sanctification as to remain by God's side and by the side of truth. To remain in fellowship with God is to be free from sin (see I Jn. 1:5). The Apostle Paul defines *"sanctification"* to the Roman brethren as being free from sin (see Rom. 6:19-20). The *"inheritance"* of the sanctified is eternal life which is the *"free gift of God"* (see Rom. 6:22-23) (see study # 64).
- K. *"I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (20:33-34).
1. Paul seemed concerned with how the Ephesian elders would view him. He reminded them of his mannerism while in Ephesus with them (see Acts 20:18-19). He tells the elders that he was guilty of the blood of no man and that he had preached the whole council of God (Acts 20:26-27). Paul reminds them that he had watched and warned the wicked night and day for three years (Acts 20:31). Paul now calls upon the elders to remember the fact that he did not *"covet man's silver, gold, or apparel."* Furthermore, Paul calls to their remembrance that he did not request financial aid from the brethren but rather worked with his hands (most likely constructing tents – see Acts 18:3). Paul worked so hard that he provided for those who were with him (no doubt his traveling companions). Paul did all this that he might set an *"example"* to others. These series of verses teach us a valuable lesson in relationship to Apostolic example. What we see and hear the Apostles doing and saying we are commanded to do (I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9) (see study # 92; Bible Authority / Apostolic Example).

2. Christians ought to labor and help the weak and needy among the saints and of the world. Paul was very concerned with the poor and needy. Paul wrote to the Galatians telling them that the Apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem had instructed him to “*remember the poor*; [and Paul replies] *which very thing I was also zealous to do*” (Gal. 2:10). Paul quotes from Jesus to confirm his words as truth. The Lord said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (this statement is now where found in the gospel accounts of the life of Christ; however, the Ephesian elders seem to be familiar with the statement).
- L. “*And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship*” (20:36-37).
1. The conversation between Paul and the Ephesian elders is concluded with a word of prayer. After the prayer it was time to say goodbye.
 2. The elders “*wept sore*” and kissed Paul sorrowful mostly because he had foretold that he would not be able to see them again. They too may have sorrowed over the fact that there would be battles ahead of them even within their own ranks.

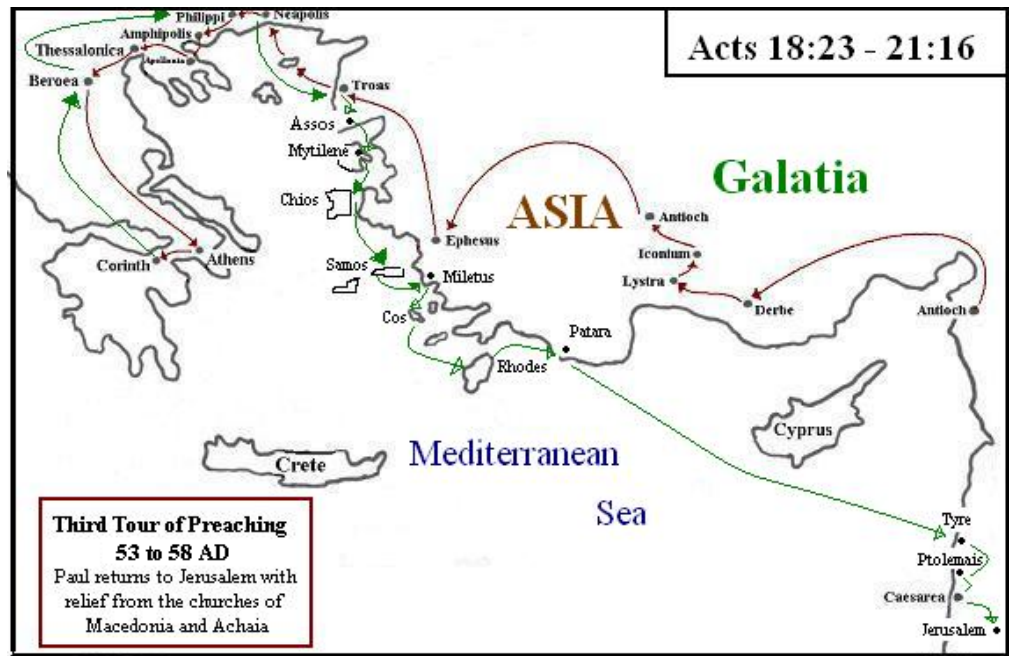
Chapter 21

I. Paul Completes the Third Tour of Preaching (21:1-16):

- A. “*And when it came to pass that we were parted from them and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: and having found a ship crossing over unto Phoenicia, we went aboard, and set sail. And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all with wives and children, brought us on our way till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell; and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again*” (21:1-6).
1. The map to the right illustrates the journey that Paul, Luke, and the other companions took.
 2. Once the men came to Tyre the ship unloaded its cargo and they were able to worship with the brethren. After seven days in Tyre, they take their leave of the brethren and pray together on the beach.
- B. “*And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Caesarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters, who prophesied.* ” (21:7-9).
1. Paul and his traveling companions leave Tyre traveling southward through Ptolemais, spend one night there, and then it was on to Caesarea (see map).
 2. Once in Caesarea, Paul and his companions in the faith come to the house of “*Philip the evangelist.*” Philip had been one of the original seven men chosen by the Holy Spirit to serve tables in Jerusalem (see Acts 6:1-6). After the “*great persecution*” (Acts 8:1) the saints in Jerusalem, including Philip, were dispersed. Philip had gone to Samaria and preached the gospel (Acts 8:4ff). Later we find Philip preaching to and baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:30-39). The last we had heard of Philip was that he was in Caesarea preaching (Acts 8:40). The year at Acts 8 was around 34 AD. The current year is 58 to 59 AD. Philip had been preaching in Caesarea for around twenty five years (see study # 77).

3. Philip had apparently married and had four daughters while living in Caesarea all those twenty five years. All of his daughters had the divinely inspired ability to prophecy.

C. *“And as we tarried there some days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And coming to us, and taking Paul’s girdle, he*



bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done” (21:9-14).

1. While Paul and his companions in the faith tarried in Caesarea a prophet named Agabus came to them and delivered a prophecy regarding Paul. It is most probable that this Agabus is the same mentioned in Acts 11:27 as the prophet who foretold of the impending famine throughout Judea.
2. Agabus, in a colorful way, foretells of Paul’s capture and deliverance to the Gentiles in Jerusalem. Once the brethren hear this they plead with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Paul can scarcely believe his ears. Their pleading caused him sorrow of heart; however, he was a man of purpose. He had purposed to come to Jerusalem before the Day of Pentecost to deliver the funds collected from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia to the needy saints (see Acts 20:16).
 - a. Let us recall that Paul knew that Jerusalem would be no less of a place of danger than any other city he had worked in (see Acts 20:22-23).
 - b. Secondly, we know that even if the threat of life existed for Paul in Jerusalem it would not dissuade him from going because he did not account his own life as anything special. He had a divine mission to accomplish and he would not allow any to cause him to veer away (see Acts 20:24) (see study # 51).
 - c. Seeing this purposeful spirit Luke and the seven other traveling companions in the faith left him alone and concluded, *“The will of the Lord be done.”*

D. *“And after these days we took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also certain of the disciples from Caesarea, bringing with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge” (21:15-16).*

1. After some time in Caesarea, the brethren took their leave and traveled southward to Jerusalem.
2. They took disciples who were from Caesarea and Mnason of Cyprus. Apparently Mnason had a home in Jerusalem that they planned to stay at while in the city. Mnason was one who had obeyed the gospel quite a while back. He may have been converted on Paul’s first tour of preaching when he, Barnabas, and John Mark traveled through the island of Cyprus preaching the gospel.

II. Paul makes a vow in Jerusalem (21:17-26):

A. *“And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he*

rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry" (21:17-19).

1. Upon arrival in Jerusalem the brethren "*received us gladly*" (apparently they knew of Paul's coming and were waiting for him). After spending the night at Mnason's house Paul, Luke, and those who traveled with him from Caesarea met with the elders of the church in Jerusalem (this would have included James [likely the brother of Jesus] who was mentioned at Acts 15). {Side note: The seven men of Acts 20:4 must have remained in Asia – they accompanied Paul "*as far as Asia*"}.
 2. Paul "*saluted*" or greeted the brethren and rehearsed all that had transpired on his trip through Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, and back to Jerusalem. It is highly probable that Paul relinquished the collected funds from the Gentile churches at this time.
- B. "*And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs*" (21:20-21).
 1. Let us recall that Paul had determined to make it to Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 20:16). It appears that he has made it. The Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem means there would have been thousands of Jews gathered for this annual feast. Among these myriad of Jews were many who "*believed*" yet they were "*zealous for the law.*" These men have been termed "*those of the circumcision that believed*" (Acts 10:45; 11:2, 17-18) and believing Pharisees (Acts 15:4) (see study # 93; Judaizing Christians). The consistent message, to this point of our study, is that when people are said to have "*believed*" they had received the gospel message and were baptized for the remission of their sins (see Acts 13:38-39). These thousands of Jews who believed were those who continued to hold that the Mosaic Law was binding in addition to the new law of Christ.
 2. These thousands of believing Jews had been informed regarding Paul's teaching. They had erroneously concluded that Paul taught "*the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.*" The Judaizing Christians were guilty of hearing things Paul said and misconstruing them so that the masses would hate him with the hatred they had for him. We may recall that Paul had wrote to the Galatians saying, "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love*" (Gal. 5:6). Again to the Corinthians Paul said, "*circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God*" (I Cor. 7:19). Paul even taught that if a man desired to keep certain days as holy days or eat some things and abstain from other foods that was OK (Romans 14). Again; however, these things had nothing to do with one's salvation! When Paul was among the Jews he even kept the Mosaic Law so as not to offend any of the Jews (Cf. I Cor. 9:20ff) [He made sure; however, to help them understand that justification was not in keeping the Mosaic Law but rather in keeping the new covenant of Jesus Christ (see Gal. 5:2ff)] (see study # 94; Distinguishing Between Matters of Justification and Indifference).
- C. "*What is it therefore? They will certainly hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men that have a vow on them; these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. But as touching the Gentiles that have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them*" (21:22-26).
 1. The elders, being concerned for Paul's safety, suggest that Paul participate in a vow of purity (most likely a Nazirite Vow {Numb. 6}). Doing this would illustrate an attitude of respect for the Mosaic Law and clear Paul of his detractors. The procedure for the Nazirite vow was to make the vow of separation and not cut any hair all the days of the vow. Secondly, at the completion of the vow, the man or woman would shave the head on the "*day of cleansing*" (Numb. 6:9). Thirdly, a

one-year-old lamb was to be offered as a trespass offering (Num. 6:12ff). After these things were completed the worshiper could partake of wine (the fruit of the vine).

2. This presents some difficulty. Paul stated to the Galatians, *“Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). Is Paul being hypocritical here as Peter was in Antioch (Gal. 2:11ff)?
 - a. The answer is found in Romans 14; I Cor. 7:19; 9:20-23.
 - b. In matters of indifference Paul had liberties. The Nazirite vow was merely a liberty so he participated in it that others may be saved (see I Cor. 9:19ff). It is for this cause that Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3).
 - c. **Paul was not seeking justification by this act**, but merely doing it for the sake of the weak (Cf. Rom. 14:1, 15; I Cor. 9:22).
3. Verse 25 indicates the wisdom of the elders. They knew that justification was not found in the Mosaic Law. Secondly, they understood the touchy situation. The Christian Jews were holding to the Mosaic Law, for Paul to go through with the elders advice may leave some Gentiles now wondering if they indeed needed to keep the Law of Moses as was indicated in Acts 15. The elders emphatically state the same message of Acts 15:22ff.
4. The brethren, Gentiles and Jews alike, needed time to grow spiritually. These matters of indifference were in no way to cause the disciples to waver in their faith. The elders therefore determined to handle the situation in this fashion to keep peace among all. Not one iota of compromise of the doctrine of Jesus Christ is here found!
5. Paul paid the price of the vow’s offering for the other four men that he made the vow with at the advice of the elders.
6. These few verses are to be understood in light of the teachings of Romans chapter 14 (all). The *“believing Jews”* that held to the Mosaic system were not doing so to the exclusion of their faith in Jesus. They were simply weak in that they considered Moses’ teachings binding upon them personally. They, therefore, continued to keep the dietary laws, circumcision, days of set feasts, ten commandments, etc. out of a sense of personal conviction. Paul had never said that they could not do that. Paul certainly stood firm against any Jew who taught that these Mosaic ordinances were binding and that one’s justification depended upon one’s obedience to the first covenant through Moses (see Gal. 2:3-5). This entire subject is an underlying topic of the book of Hebrews.

III. **Trouble with the Jews from Asia (21:27-36):**

- A. *“And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teaches all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple”* (21:27-29).
 1. The vow that Paul partook of was to last seven days. Paul, and the other four men with him, were to shave their heads on this seventh day.
 2. Before he had a chance to fulfill his vow he is accosted by the Jews from Asia. These Jews shout out accusations against Paul:
 - a. Paul had taught against the Mosaic Law and circumcision.
 - b. Paul has defiled the holy temple in Jerusalem in that he brought a Gentile (Trophimus) into its midst. Note that the people only *“supposed”* that Trophimus had entered the temple. The Jews carelessly accuse Paul of defiling the temple with a Gentile simply because they had earlier saw Paul walking the streets of Jerusalem with Trophimus.
- B. *“And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul” (21:30-32).*
 1. News of Paul teaching against Moses and bringing a Gentile into the temple to defile it was cause enough for a lynching.

2. The angry mob apprehends Paul and begins beating him with the intention of killing him. The chief captain quickly gains intelligence of an intense disturbance in the city and sends soldiers and centurions to break up the chaos. No doubt the Roman guard was on heightened alert seeing that the Day of Pentecost had come and thousands of Jews were in the streets.
- C. *“Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him”* (21:33-36).
 1. The *“chief captain”* (*chiliarchos*) = “a chiliarch, commander of a thousand men; hence, a commander, military chief” (Moulton 436). Interestingly, the chief captain actually lays hold of Paul with his own hands. Such a task would have put this high ranking military man at the point of intense danger. Once the captain had hold of Paul he commanded that he be bound with two chains and brought to the castle to question Paul’s crime.
 2. As Paul is being drug away by the Roman guard the people are shouting, *“Away with him.”*

IV. Paul Addresses the angry Mob in the Hebrew Language (21:37-22 all):

- A. *“And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?”* (21:37-38).
 1. Paul surprises the chief captain by speaking the Greek language seeing that he was a Hebrew Jew. The captain immediately assumes that Paul is the Egyptian who had previously stirred up chaos in Jerusalem being the leader of four thousand *“Assassins.”* If so, the captain had a true prize... i.e., one who hated Rome and was a ring leader of murderers.
 2. An *“Assassin”* (*sicarii*) = “a dagger; an assassin, bandit, robber” (Moulton 366). “Josephus relates that ‘there sprang up in Jerusalem a class of robbers called Sicarii, who slew men in the daytime, and in the midst of the city. This they did chiefly when they mingled with the populace at festivals, and, hiding short daggers in their garments, stabbed with them those that were their enemies. The first to be assassinated by them was Jonathan the high priest, and after him many were slain daily’ (Ant. Xx.8.6; xx.9). The name is derived from Lat. Sica, ‘a dagger.’ The Sicarii were implacable in their hatred to Rome and to those Jews who were suspected of leaning toward Rome. They took a leading part in the Jewish rebellion and in the disturbance previous to it, and also in the faction quarrels during the war” (ISBE; v. 1, pp. 330-331).
- B. *“But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. And when he had give him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language saying”* (21:39-40).
 1. Paul explains to the chief captain that he is not that Egyptian, the leader of assassins, who has a passionate hatred for Rome and all its Jewish sympathizers. Paul tells the military captain that he is from Tarsus in Cilicia, *“no mean”* city. The term *“no mean”* (*asemou*) = “obscure, insignificant; no unimportant city” (AG 114). “Tarsus became important as a University City, whose people’s zeal for learning and philosophy surpassed that of Athens or Alexandria, though it did not attract students from abroad as those more famous places did” (ISBE; v. 4, pp. 736).
 2. The captain, seeing that Paul posed no threat to Rome, permitted him to address the angry mob. Paul begins to speak in the Hebrew language and gains the attention of the mob.

Chapter 22

Paul gives five *apologias* (defenses) after his third tour of preaching. The first defense starts at Acts 22:1, second (23:1-10), third (24:10-21), fourth (25:6-8), and fifth at

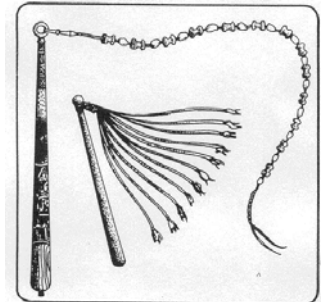
I. Paul addresses the angry Mob (22 all):

- A. *“Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defense which I now make unto you. And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith”* (22:1-2).
1. A *“defense”* (*apologia*) = “a verbal defense (an argument in support or justification of something)” (Moulton 45). Paul desired to make an effective argument unto the Jews to support his teachings against one seeking their justification by the Mosaic Law and demanding that men be circumcised.
 2. When the Jews heard Paul speaking in the Hebrew language they gave the more earnest ear to his words. Said language had died with many; however, the most devout Jews held to it (Acts 6:1; 9:29; II Cor. 11:22; and Phil. 3:5). Paul’s use of the language demanded an ear seeing that only the most devout Jews had continued to use this language of Israel’s ancient history.
- B. *“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye are all this day:”* (22:3).
1. Paul begins his defense by explaining to his Jewish audience that he too is a Jew from Tarsus of Cilicia.
 2. Paul was not merely a Jew by race but he was instructed at the feet of *“Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers”* (see study # 51). “Gamaliel’s reputation as one of the greatest teachers in the annals of Judaism, however, remains untarnished and is perhaps best exemplified in Mish. Sotah ix. 15, ‘Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and abstinence died out at the same time’” (ISBE; v. 2, pp. 394). Mentioning the name Gamaliel was like mentioning a modern day Moses to the Jews.
 3. Such an upbringing and instruction produced a man zealous for God (just as all the Jews who loved the Mosaic Law that he was addressing). Paul is attempting to get the zealous Jews to see that he was just like they were before seeing Jesus.
- C. *“And I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished”* (22:4-5).
1. Paul tells the angry mob that he too, being a zealous and law abiding Jew, persecuted those who were identified with Jesus even *“unto death.”*
 2. Paul explains to the Jewish audience that he was so zealous in persecuting those of *“the Way”* that he would travel as far as Damascus, by authority of the high priest, so that he may capture and bring to Jerusalem those Jews whom he perceived to be defecting from the Mosaic Law. Paul did this that these defectors may be tried and punished.
- D. *“And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew night unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me”* (22:6-9).
1. The account of Saul’s conversion has been previously studied at Acts 9.
 2. Interestingly, Paul continues to have his audience’s attention even after mentioning the fact that Jesus (the Messiah) appeared to him on the road to Damascus.
- E. *“And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard”* (22:10-15).
1. Paul tells the angry Jewish mob of his sighting of Jesus, *“the Righteous One.”* Paul is telling the angry Jews that he has actually seen the Messiah. This Messiah had *“appointed”* Paul to do and know his will. The word *“appointed”* (*tetaktai*) = “to arrange; to set, appoint, in a certain station”

- (Moulton 398). The Lord had divinely arranged for Paul to be a messenger of the gospel to the people.
2. Paul was struck blind for a season after he saw the Messiah. Ananias of Damascus healed Paul's eyes and explained to him his divinely appointed task. Paul was to know the will of God, to see the Righteous One, and to "*witness*" (*martus*) to all men what he sees and hears. The word "*witness*" = "a testifier of a doctrine, Rev. 1:5; 3:14; 11:3" (Moulton 258). Paul would be an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Herein is a lesson on Bible authority. The apostle Paul would "*witness*;" i.e., testify divine revelation, to the public as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. What Paul "*heard and saw*" were divine things. Recall that the Apostle Paul said to the Philippians, "*The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you*" (Phil. 4:9). Paul, and the other Apostles of Jesus Christ, received divine revelation regarding how we should live, speak, and worship. What we see and hear them do we are to do (see I Cor. 11:1) (see study # 25).
- F. "*And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name*" (22:16).
1. Ananias tells Paul not to tarry but rather be baptized in order to "*wash away thy sins.*" We have noted in this study that the Acts 2:38 passage serves as a thesis statement for the remainder of the book of Acts. When those on the Day of Pentecost heard Peter's convicting sermon and consequentially asked, "*What must we do?*" (Acts 2:37) Peter answered saying, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins...*" (Acts 2:38). The Lord divinely inspired Peter and Ananias to teach and administer the act of baptism so that men could be forgiven of their sins. Every believer in the book of Acts was thereby baptized for the remission of their sins (see study # 16):
 - a. Jews on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38).
 - b. The Samaritans (Acts 8:12-13).
 - c. The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-38)
 - d. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:18; 22:16).
 - e. Cornelius the Gentile and his household (Acts 10:47-48)
 - f. Lydia the seller of Purple from Thyatira (Acts 16:15).
 - g. The Philippian jailor (Acts 16:32-34).
 - h. The Corinthians (Acts 18:8)
 - i. The disciples of John (Acts 19:4-5).
 2. We may refer to this type of study as the "Baptism sandwich." I do not intend to make light of the subject; however, as a sandwich has two pieces of bread and material in the middle so we see the subject of baptism in Acts. The first use of baptism states clearly that it is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and the last statement regarding baptism in the book of acts states that it cleanses man of sin (Acts 22:16). All cases of baptism mentioned between these first and last statements in Acts, though it does not say it, must refer to the forgiveness of sins as well. If baptism is not for the forgiveness of sins as Acts 2:38 and 22:16 state then what is it for? Man may dream up many reasons for baptism; however, the Bible tells us that people did it, by the authority of Jesus Christ, to be forgiven of their sins.
 3. Not only was Paul told to be baptized to wash away his sins but also that he should "*call upon the name of God.*" The idea of calling upon the name of God is "To call upon a god, invoke (to call upon for assistance), appeal to" (LS 292). The Christian needs assistance to make it through this life and on into heaven. Those who recognize this need will call out to God for forgiveness, for patience, for strength, for encouragement, for healing of self or of loved ones, etc. (see Rom. 10:9-13; I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 4:4). To call upon the name of God is to admit your needs that only deity can meet (see study # 95; Calling upon the Name of the Lord).
- G. "*And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of Stephen thy*

witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles” (22:17-21).

1. After seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus and being baptized for the remission of his sins by Ananias Paul returns to Jerusalem and prays in the temple (before this; however, we know that Paul had traveled into Arabia to preach the gospel – see Acts 9:19ff; Gal. 1:17). Paul speaks to the Lord explaining his concerns that no one will listen to him seeing that he persecuted the church to the point of death. No one will trust him.
 2. Jesus replies to Paul’s prayer by saying that he would, “**Send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.**” God had always intended for the Gentiles to be included in justification through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Gen. 12:1-4; Gal. 3:27-28).
- H. “*And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live*” (22:22).
1. The Jews were pacified for a moment by Paul’s use of the Hebrew language. They saw their own selves in Paul for a moment. They may have entertained the idea of Jesus being the Messiah for just a moment; however, when Paul mentions the salvation of the Gentiles they return to their violent disposition. As they had cried out before he spoke so they now cry again saying, “*Away with such a fellow from the earth*” (see Acts 21:36). These Jews exclaim, “*it is not fit*” that he should live. The phrase, “*it is fit*” (*katheken*) = “what is fit, right, meet” (Moulton 207). The idea is that it would not be right for Paul to be allowed to continue his existence on this earth because he mentioned God’s salvation and the Gentiles in the same breath. The Jews had a history of intense hatred and disgust for Gentiles (see Matt. 15:25-28; 18:17; Gal. 2:11-12).
 2. Paul’s predicament goes from bad to worse. He had been accused of teaching against the Mosaic Law and circumcision. He was accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple of God. Now, he is heard preaching the salvation of Gentiles. Said words are more than a prejudice and ignorant mob can take. It is back to wanting to see Paul dead.
- I. “*And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him*” (22:23-24).
1. The Jews threw a fit of rage and displayed their anger by taking their garments off and throwing them into the air along with dust. These people were visually bothered by Paul. Seeing such anger gave way to the chief captain being determined to find out what Paul had done to cause the people to get so worked up. He decides to scourge Paul that he may force information from the prisoner.
 2. The “*scourge*” was a “beating with leather straps or rods as a form of punishment... Particularly cruel was the use of a special whip, probably with bone or rock on the ends of the thongs, called the ‘scorpion’ due to its potential to inflict a painful sting” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 358 / see picture above). Jesus experienced this same treatment (see Matt. 27:26)
- J. “*And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and un-condemned? And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? For this man is a Roman. And the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. And the chief captian answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am a Roman born. They then that were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him*” (22:25-29).
1. As Paul is being tied to a post for scourging he asks, “*Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and un-condemned?*” Roman citizens had rights that those not belonging to Rome did not have such as the right of a fair trial. “Under the emperors the Roman citizenship was sold in order to fill their exchequer (national treasury).”⁶ Perhaps in Paul’s beaten state he appeared too poor to purchase such citizenship. Paul could not have obtained his Roman born citizenship through



⁶ Lenski R. C. H. Commentary on the New Testament, Acts pg. 919

Tarsus because Tarsus was a free city (It was not a Roman colony). Most speculate that Paul's father must have done some honorary service to the Romans and thus earned citizenship that was passed to his son Saul (Paul).

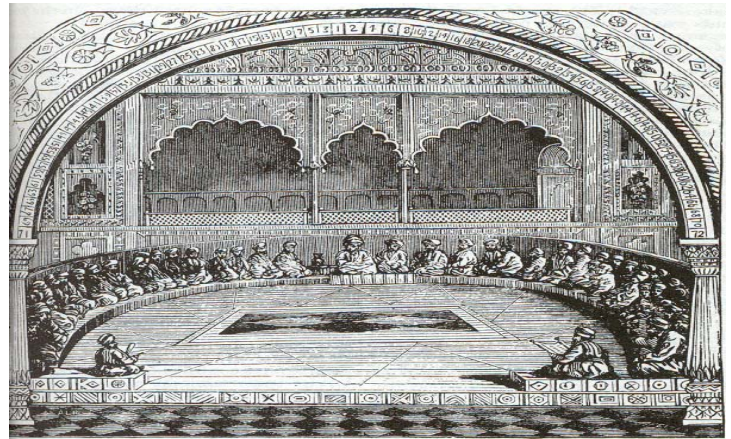
2. To be born Roman was superior to having purchased the citizenship. Paul actually had greater Roman status than the chief captain. The chief captain knew this and thereby was afraid of bringing punishment upon himself for unlawful treatment of a Roman citizen.
- K. *“But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down and set him before them”* (22:30).
1. The chief captain continues to be determined to find out the reason Paul has caused the people to be so worked up.
 2. The chief captain commands that the Sanhedrin council assemble and try Paul.

Chapter 23

I. Paul is tried by the Sanhedrin Council (Acts 23:1-11):

A. *“And Paul, looking steadfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day”* (23:1).

1. The identity of the Jewish governing council had been discussed at Acts 4. The Romans appeared to be indifferent to its existence and here it seems to be leaned upon to settle matters that did not directly affect Rome. The above picture was taken from Smith's Bible Dictionary pp. 589.



2. The atmosphere in this gathering is tense. No one speaks. Paul looks upon the council *“steadfastly”* (*atenizo*) = “to fix one's eyes upon, to look steadily, gaze intently” (Moulton 58). With a sharp and fixed look Paul addresses the council stating that he had lived in all good conscience before God. Paul had always conducted himself in a manner consistent with what he believed God to have him do (i.e., lawfully and justly) (see Acts 26:9-11). That would include his days of persecuting Christians and his current days of trying to help people become Christians. Such a statement helps us understand that man is not judged by his conscience but rather divine revelation (see study # 97; The Conscience and # 57; The Nature of Truth).

B. *“And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?”* (23:2-3).

1. Ananias, upon hearing of Paul professing his innocence in relation to law, commands that he be struck in the mouth. Ananias apparently took Paul's teaching to be opposed to the Mosaic Law and thereby such a statement by Paul would be very offensive and deserving of being struck.
2. Paul is struck and then angered at the hypocritical actions of Ananias. The Law of Moses commanded that no man be struck before a just trial be performed (see Lev. 19:15). Paul had not been given any trial. Paul lashes out at Ananias referring to him as a *“whited wall”* (*kekoniamente*) = “to whitewash or plaster” (Moulton 237; LS 444)... “Jews were accustomed to whitewash the entrances to their sepulchers, as a warning against defilement by touching them; is applied to a hypocrite who conceals his malice under an outward assumption of piety.” (Thayer 354-355). Paul considered Ananias a hypocrite in that while he stood in judgment as a representative of the Law of Moses he too violates it by such actions. Paul's reaction reminds us of other times when he acted in an aggressive or outspoken ways. At times, Paul displayed a spirit that did not shy away from confrontational situations (see study # 51):

- a. Paul had a “*sharp contention*” with Barnabas over whether to take John Mark on the second tour of preaching (see Acts 15:37ff).
 - b. Paul confronted Peter to the face about his hypocritical actions (Gal. 2:11ff).
- C. “*And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high priest? And Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people*” (23:4-5).
 - 1. The bystanders in the council warned Paul of speaking to the high priest in such disrespectful tones and words. Paul apologizes; however, we should note that no man is above the Law of God.
 - 2. Paul quotes from Exodus 22:28 which states, “*Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people.*” Paul had been so far removed from Judaism that he did not even know that Ananias was the current high priest.
- D. “*But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called into question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both*” (23:6-8).
 - 1. The **Sadducees** were discussed at Acts 4:1-2. “The Sadducees were essentially aristocratic (i.e., a person of noble heritage and character)... they derived their power from their class, while the Pharisees derived theirs from learning... they denied the resurrection of the body, and did not believe in any existence after death... and consequently denied future rewards or punishments in a life to come (cf. Mk. 12:18; Acts 4:12; 23:80). The consequent emphasis on life in this world was consistent with the Sadducees’ concern with their position of power, status, and wealth, and it left no room for messianic hopes and a coming kingdom of God” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 279). The Pharisees “were a Jewish sect or party whose members voluntarily took upon themselves a strict regimen of laws pertaining to purity, Sabbath observance, prayer, and tithing... A Pharisee was usually a layman without scribal education, whereas a scribe was trained in rabbinic law and had official status. The **Pharisees** and scribes observed and perpetuated an oral tradition of laws handed down from the former teachers and wise men of Israel. This oral law, or Halakah, was highly venerated by the Pharisees and scribes. They taught that it had been handed down from Moses and was to be given the same respect as the written laws of the Pentateuch” (ISBE; v. 3, pp. 822ff). Luke states that the Pharisees believe in a resurrection of the body and a hope of eternal salvation.
 - 2. Paul saw a way of escaping a justice system that was sure to fail in giving him a fair trial. Paul observed Pharisees and Sadducees in the council and pitted them against each other to get the attention away from himself. It worked. Paul brings up the heated topic of the resurrection and hope of the dead and it started an intense dispute between the two Jewish parties.
- E. “*And there arose a great clamor: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees; part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel? And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle*” (23:9-10).
 - 1. Paul identified himself with the Pharisees that believe in a resurrection of the dead and thereby gained sympathy from this group. The Pharisees, who believed in angels and spirits, state “*We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?*” The Pharisees, for the moment, contemplated the reality and possibility of truth that Paul spoke because they agreed and sympathized with a fellow Pharisee who shared their belief in the resurrection, angels, and spirits.
 - 2. The Sadducees; however, wanted no part of Paul’s teaching. The clash between these two Jewish titans caused a “*great clamor.*”
 - 3. Once again, the chief captain intervenes for Paul due to the Jews getting worked up. Paul is thereby brought into the castle for safety sake.
- F. “*And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome*” (23:11).
 - 1. Paul is brought, by force, away from the violent Sanhedrin Council to the “*castle*” for governmental protection. That night the Lord stood with Paul and spoke to him as he did on the

road to Damascus. The Lord tells Paul not to be discouraged by the events with the Jews because there was much more work to do at Rome.

2. Paul had “*witnessed*,” i.e., (*martus*) “a testifier of a doctrine, Rev. 1:5; 3:14; 11:3” (Moulton 258) to the Jews at Acts 22:10 and is now called upon to testify to those in Rome of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

II. A Plot to kill Paul and the chief Captain’s Aid (23:12-35):

- A. “*And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty that made this conspiracy*” (23:12-13).
 1. Forty Jews conspire together putting themselves under a ban not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. One is left to wonder if these forty men eventually starved to death due to their failure to kill Paul.
 2. These angry Jews have:
 - a. Falsely accused Paul of teaching against the Mosaic Law and Circumcision (Acts 21:27).
 - b. Falsely accused Paul of bringing a Gentile to the temple (Acts 21:28-29).
 - c. Beat Paul in the attempt to kill him (Acts 21:30-32).
 - d. Tried him in the Sanhedrin council (Acts 23:1ff).
 - e. Now some of the Jews are setting themselves under a ban and curse of no food until they have killed Paul.
 3. Moses had commanded death to any who would speak against his divinely delivered law and thereby the Jews only thought that what they were doing was a service to Jehovah (see Deut. 13:5). The entire scene depicts the importance of knowing all the facts before one pulls the trigger on another. However we may view the events transpiring there is no doubt that these Jews were without excuse for not knowing of the Christ and believing the evident proofs.
- B. “*And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, before he comes near, are ready to slay him*” (23:14-15).
 1. The chief priest and elders were not only members of the Sanhedrin council but they represented civil law among the Jews. To follow through with this murderous plot on Paul’s life is to set aside justice and all fairness.
 2. It matters not that the chief priests and elders were not personally guilty of such a crime what matters is that they approved of such a dastardly deed and thereby have connected themselves to the crime.
- C. “*But Paul’s sister’s son heard of their lying in wait, and he came and entered into the castle and told Paul. And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath something to tell him*” (23:16-17).
 1. Obviously such a plan gained wings eventually reaching the ears of Paul’s nephew and he in turn tells Paul.
 2. Paul immediately calls a Roman centurion and request that the young man be brought to the chief captain so that he would be aware of their plans.
- D. “*So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is it that thou hast to tell me? And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee*” (23:18-21).
 1. Paul’s nephew is brought to the chief captain by the centurion.
 2. The young man warns Claudius Lysias (the chief captain) about the plot to kill Paul.
- E. “*So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers*

to go as far as Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: and he bade them provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor” (23:22-24).

1. Each centurion was over one hundred soldiers. Claudius calls for two hundred Roman soldiers to escort Paul safely to Caesarea. Additionally, Claudius Lysias called for seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen. Four hundred and seventy armed men would escort Paul for his safety.
 2. The third hour of the night would have probably been the 9:00 PM hour (Jewish method of time keeping). Serious and expensive precautions are taken for Paul likely due to the fact that he was an un-condemned Roman citizen.
 3. Luke’s record of Felix (Marcus Antonius Felix – 52 through 60 AD [Lenski on Acts pp. 949-950]) being governor over Palestine helps us identify the time as no later than 60 AD and probably no earlier than 58 AD.
- F. *“And he wrote a letter after this form: Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting. This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them when I cam upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him down unto their council: whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was shown to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee” (23:26-30).*
1. Claudius Lysias, captain of one thousand Roman soldiers (i.e., 10 centurions and their companies), writes a letter to Felix explaining to him Paul’s predicament.
 2. Lysias, seeing no reason for death or bonds, sends the letter regarding Paul to Felix suggesting that his accusers come before the Roman governor to lay their accusations against him.
- G. *“So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: and they, when they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. And when he had read it, he asked of what province he was; and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thee fully, said he, when thine accusers also are come: and he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s palace” (23:31-35).*
1. Caesarea was about 65 miles Northwest of Jerusalem. The caravan of 470 soldiers leaves Jerusalem at night and makes it to Antipatris (located about 30 miles north of Jerusalem toward Caesarea). The next morning, the 400 foot soldiers return to Jerusalem while the 70 horsemen continue with Paul to Caesarea (23:32).
 2. Arriving in Caesarea that same day, the soldiers delivered Lysias’ letter to Felix, the governor of Caesarea, along with Paul. Felix asks what province Paul was from to determine whether he was responsible for this case. Apparently he had no interest involving himself in it. When it was said that Paul was of Cilicia, a province Felix was responsible for, he said he would hear more of this case when the accusers of Paul come to Caesarea. Until Paul’s accusers come to Caesarea, Paul would be kept prisoner in Herod’s palace.

Chapter 24

I. The Jews make their Fourfold Charges against the Apostle Paul (24:1-

- A. *“And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and with an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul” (24:1).*
1. After Paul had been in Caesarea for five days, the high priest Ananias arrived bringing with him selected elders and an “*orator*” named Tertullus. An “*orator*” is “A public speaker, pleader orator” (LS 717). “A speaker in court, advocate, attorney” (AG 735).
 2. These men stand before Felix to make their accusations against Paul.
- B. *“And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation, we accept it in all ways and in all*

places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I entreat thee to hear us of thy clemency a few words” (24:2-4).

1. Tertullus addresses Felix, the Roman governor, with words of adulation and thanksgiving for their existing peace. Tertullus mentions Felix’s “*providence*” (*pronoia*) = “forethought; providence, provident care” (Moulton 345). It does not appear that Tertullus is ascribing a character of deity to the Roman governor but rather simply thanking him for having the forethought of protecting the people under his care from the “*evils*” against the nation.
2. Tertullus, not wanting to be tedious, begins his speech regarding the accusations against Paul.
- C. “*For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: who moreover assayed to profane the temple: on whom also we laid hold: (vs. 7 not in ASV text and reads, “But the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him away out of our hands”)*” (24:5-7).
 1. Tertullus introduces Paul to Felix by identifying him as (see study # 51 and other charges brought against Paul by many in Corinth):
 - a. A “*pestilent fellow*.” The word “*pestilent*” (*loimos*) = “a pestilence, plague... met. A pest” (Moulton 253). “Designation of a person dangerous to the public” (AG 479).
 - b. Secondly, Tertullus identifies Paul as a “*mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world*.” One who “*moves*” (*kineo*) something is to “set a-going; to move... to excite” (Moulton 231). Tertullus accuses Paul of setting in motion “*insurrections*” (*stasis*) = “a tumultuous assemblage, popular outbreak... seditious (conduct or language inciting rebellion against the authority of a state) movement” (Moulton 203). The orator’s point is that wherever this man goes there is a riot and he is the cause of such public outbreaks. Acts 17:6 records a riot in Thessalonica and Acts 19:28 points out another one in Ephesus of Asia.
 - c. Thirdly, Paul is accused of being a “*ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes*.” A “*ringleader*” (*protostates*) = “one stationed in the first rank of an army; a leader; a chief, ringleader” (Moulton 355). That which Paul is accused of being the chief leader of was the “*sect of the Nazarenes*.” To these Jews Christianity or “*the way*” was nothing more than a “*sect*” (*aireseos*) = “a choice or option; hence, a sect, faction” (Moulton 9). Those who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of the Old Testament prophecies were identified as “*the sect of the Nazarenes*” (i.e., a factious group attempting to break away from the Mosaic System).
 - d. Fourthly, Paul is accused of profaning the temple of Jehovah God by bringing a Gentile, Trophimus, within its walls (see Acts 21:28-29).
 2. Summarily, Paul’s accusers state the following to Felix. Paul is a person dangerous to the public because everywhere he goes he causes a riot due to being the chief leader and preacher of the factious movement of the Nazarenes. This Paul cares nothing for the Mosaic Law, circumcision, or the temple of Jehovah.
- D. “*from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him. And the Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that these things were so*” (24:8-9).
 1. Tertullus was confident that Paul, upon examination, would confirm with his own mouth the truth of these malicious accusations.
 2. After Tertullus spoke the accompanying Jews verbally expressed their agreement to his words to the governor.

II. Paul Delivers his Third Defense (24:10-21) (The first being found at Acts 22:1-21 and the second at Acts 23:1-10):

- A. “*And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my defense:*” (24:10).
 1. Three times now Paul makes a “*defense*” (see Acts 22:1; 23:6; and here).
 2. Felix had patiently listened to the accusations made against Paul and now prepares to listen to the Apostle Paul make his defense. The fact that Paul states, “*of many years*” Felix had judged the nation illustrates that it was more toward the end of Felix’s days as governor.
- B. “*seeing that thou canst take knowledge that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd,*

nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me” (24:11-13).

1. Paul states nothing but facts in his defense: Twelve days had passed since Paul came to Jerusalem with the funds for the needy saints and to worship:
 - a. Day one Paul meets with James and the elders of Jerusalem. He delivers the funds collected from the Gentile brethren in Macedonia and Achaia.
 - b. Day two Paul makes his appearance in the temple under the Nazirite Vow.
 - c. Day three through seven he fulfilled his vow. While in the temple he is apprehended by the Jews and beaten. Lysias breaks up the mob and rescues him.
 - d. Day eight Paul appears before the Sanhedrin Council. Nothing is accomplished. Paul makes it clear that the only reason anyone has of apprehending him is that he preached about the resurrection of the just and unjust (a subject that pitted the Pharisees against the Sadducees).
 - e. Day nine, Paul is informed about the plot to kill him and is taken to Caesarea.
 - f. The tenth day he arrives in Caesarea and handed over to Felix.
 - g. The eleventh through the twelfth day, Paul is in Roman ward awaiting his trial.
 - h. The thirteenth day is the present.

2. Paul denies disputing with anyone or stirring up a riotous crowd in the temple or the city. Paul states that these men who bring these accusations cannot prove that he did any of what they have charged him of. It is Paul’s word against theirs.

C. *“But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust”* (24:14-15).

1. Paul did agree with Tertullus on one point and that was the fact that he was a member of *“the Way which they call a sect.”* While the Jews viewed Christianity as a factious break away from the Mosaic System Paul refers to it as the answer to God’s promises and hope of man’s eternal salvation through the resurrection of the dead (see study # 98; The Resurrection of all Humanity).
2. Note that Paul taught not only a resurrection of the just but of the unjust too. All will be raised from the grave one day and give account to God for the things done while among the living. The just will be forever in heaven with the Lord and the unjust shall be cast into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone for ever and ever.

D. *“Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but there were certain Jews from Asia who ought to have been there before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me. Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they found when I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day”* (24:16-21).

1. Paul’s answers would seem to leave the governor with the obvious option of releasing him. The Jews are wrongfully accusing a man who has love and respect for the Mosaic Law. Paul has even showed his affection for his *“nation”* in that he brought *“alms and offerings”* to the needy saints (see Rom. 15:25ff).
2. Paul’s point is that the only true charge that can be levied against him is that he preached in the public that there will be a resurrection of the just and unjust. Is this worthy of bonds and prison time? Where are his Jewish accusers from Asia who beat him while he peacefully fulfilled his vow in the temple?

III. Felix Replies to the Accusations of the Jews and Paul’s Defense (24:22-27):

A. *“But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter. And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him”* (24:22-23).

1. Felix was very familiar with Christianity most likely due to Philip's twenty five years of preaching in Caesarea.
 2. After hearing both sides of the issue (one's word against another) Felix really had no other fair recourse than to "*defer*" the case; i.e., "postpone" (see NM 581). Unfortunately, we do not read anything in history about Claudius Lysias ever coming to Caesarea and giving additional testimony. Lysias had obviously favored Paul yet apparently did not make it to Caesarea to defend him (at least not as far as we know).
- B.** *"But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him"* (24:24-26).
1. Felix is known in history as one of an evil character. "When occasion offered, he did not hesitate to employ the Sicarii (Assassins) for his own ends, including the murder of the high priest Jonathan (Josephus Ant. Xx.8.5)... His leaving Paul in bonds was but a final instance of one who sacrificed duty and justice for the sake of his own unscrupulous selfishness" (ISBE v. 2, pp. 298). Drusilla, Felix's wife, had not fallen far from the wicked character tree herself. "She was the youngest of three daughters of Herod Agrippa I, her sisters being Bernice and Mariamne (Ant. Xviii.5.4)... at the age of 14 she was given in marriage by her brother Agrippa II to Azizus King of Emesa. Shortly afterward, Felix, when he was procurator of Judea (AD 52-60), employed a Cyprian sorcerer named Simon to persuade her to desert her husband and marry himself. Her decision to break the Jewish law and marry Felix was also influenced by the cruelty of Azizus and the hatred of Bernice, who was jealous of her beauty. By Felix she had one son, Agrippa, who died in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79" (ISBE v. 1, pp. 995). Felix and Drusilla thereby had no lawful right to be married and seemed to cast care of morality behind them. It is interesting to note that not even the author of the ISBE article saw "cruelty" as legal reasons for a divorce (see study # 99; Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage).
 2. Paul's message to these two sinners was that of righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come. Man is to live lawfully and exercise self-control to do so. Judgment awaits all in relation to their life decisions. Felix and Drusilla were terrified by such talk and commanded that Paul leave them for the time being. The classic statement of history is made by Felix when he tells Paul, "*Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me.*" Preachers for years have paralleled this statement to others of our time who reject the gospel message putting its demands of righteousness and self-control off for another time (see study # 89). There is no guarantee of tomorrow. Let all who read obey the gospel now by being baptized for the remission of your sins and purposing in one's heart to live righteously and with self-control. The final Day of Judgment comes.
 3. Felix and Drusilla expected to be offered money by Paul but what they got was a gospel sermon that demanded that they change their lives.
- C.** *"But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds"* (24:27).
1. The year of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment was obviously 58 – 60 AD (the last two years of Felix's rule of governor). Felix, out of a spirit of dullness to other's lives, leaves Paul in prison for two years just to remain in good standing with the Jews.
 2. Porcius Festus inherits Paul's case. "Josephus' writings picture Festus as a prudent and honorable governor... he ridded the province of Judea from the Sicarii (see Assassins) that Felix actually used..." (See ISBE v. 2, pp. 299). Festus' rule lasted only three years (i.e., 60 – 62 AD).
 3. Paul spent two years in prison (what a waist of life at the hands of a selfish and ungodly government leader).

Chapter 25
60 AD

I. Porcius Festus Inherits Paul's Case / Paul delivers his Fourth Defense (25:1-8):

- A. *“Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, asking a favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying a plot to kill him on the way”* (25:1-3).
1. The old adage, “Time heals all wounds” did not apply to these Jews. Two years in prison was not satisfactory. The Jews wanted Paul dead.
 2. The Jews waste no time informing the new governor over the province of Palestine about Paul. Their request was that Festus send Paul to Jerusalem to be tried but secretly they wanted to kill him on the road (their previous plan to do so failed – see Acts 23:12).
- B. *“Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Caesarea, and that he himself was about to depart thither shortly. Let them therefore, saith he, that are of power among you go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him”* (25:4-5).
1. Paul continued in a Roman prison within the city of Caesarea. Festus had come to Jerusalem to exercise his governorship over the area; however, he intended to travel back to Caesarea shortly.
 2. Not wanting to get caught up in a lengthy trial in Jerusalem the governor suggest that the Jews travel to Caesarea and make their accusations against Paul there (God providentially cared for Paul on this occasion).
- C. *“And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought. And when he was come, the Jews that had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges which they could not prove; while Paul said in his defense, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against this temple, nor against Caesar, have I sinned at all”* (25:6-8).
1. Eight days latter Festus travels to Caesarea with the Jews and a trial is conducted against Paul. The Jews, once again, levy many *“grievous charges which they could not prove.”* The charges, as stated previously at Acts 24:5-6, are:
 - a. Paul was accused of being a pest to society.
 - b. One who starts rebellious public outbreaks within the city (insurrection).
 - c. The ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
 - d. One who profanes the holy temple of Jehovah God.
 2. Paul delivers the fourth of five *apologias* (defenses) after his third tour of preaching here. The first defense starts at Acts 22:1, second (Acts 23:1-10), and third (Acts 24:10-21). Paul, once again, tells the new Roman governor that the accusations are false and the Jews cannot prove otherwise.

II. Paul Request to appear before Caesar's Judgment-seat in Rome (25:9-12):

- A. *“But Festus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? But Paul said, I am standing before Caesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest”* (25:9-10).
1. Festus was just as uncaring about an individual's life as Felix (the previous governor who left Paul in prison for two years in order to gain favor of the Jews). Here are some possibilities as far as Festus desiring to send Paul to Jerusalem:
 - a. Send Paul to Jerusalem and allow the Jews to kill him on the road and be done with the case.
 - b. Send Paul to Jerusalem and pronounce a verdict of guilty upon him that greater favor would be received of the Jews toward Festus.
 - c. Simply appease the Jews by drawing out Paul's case in Jerusalem.
 2. Whatever Festus had in mind it was intended to *“gain favor with the Jews.”* Paul was nothing more than a political prisoner in which Festus intended to use as a springboard for future success in the region.

3. Paul replies to Festus by telling him that the current trial is occurring just as it should. There is no need to travel to Jerusalem. Paul tells the governor that he is innocent and that the governor no doubt could see this himself.
- B. *“If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if none of those things is true whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Caesar: unto Caesar shalt thou go”* (25:11-12).
1. Paul does not deny a death penalty for those who deserve it including himself (see study # 100; The Death Penalty). However, Paul will not give up his life to an angry group of Jews who are accusing him falsely.
 2. Seeing that there was absolutely no way of receiving a fair trial in Caesarea or Jerusalem Paul called upon his Roman right to make an appeal to Caesar. Festus considers the appeal, consults with his council, and grants him to travel to Rome to appeal before Caesar of Rome. The current Roman Emperor was Nero Claudius Caesar (AD 54 – 68). Later, this same Nero is accused of setting fire to Rome on July 10, AD 64 (after which intense persecutions began for the Christians).

III. **King Agrippa and Bernice arrive in Caesarea (25:13-22):**

- A. *“Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea, and saluted Festus”* (25:13).
1. Herod Agrippa I had died in 44 AD as recorded at Acts 12. Herod had three daughters (Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla) and one son (Agrippa). Herod’s son Agrippa was born in 27 AD and was only seventeen at the time of his father’s death. Agrippa was too young to succeed his father so Roman governors (procurators) governed Palestine during the years of 44 to 53 AD. During the year 50 AD Agrippa, now 26 years old, was named king of Chalcis and three years later (age 30) he was named king over Palestine and surrounding areas. The current year (AD 60) would place Agrippa at the age of about 37 years old. Agrippa lived with his sister Bernice in an incestuous relationship that came to be the common chatter among the Romans (see Herod ISBE v. 2, pp. 697).
 2. Agrippa and Bernice had traveled to Caesarea to salute Festus in his new position as governor of the region.
- B. *“And as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king, saying, there is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix; about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for sentence against him. To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defense concerning the matter laid against him. When therefore they were come together here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the emperor, I commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Caesar. And Agrippa said unto Festus, I also could wish to hear the man my self. Tomorrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him”* (25:14-22).
1. Festus takes the opportunity to lay Paul’s case before the king that advice may be given regarding his decisions up to this point. Paul’s appeal to Caesar in this case certainly would make Festus look like an incapable vacillating governor who is unable to make decisions on his own. Festus was thereby concerned about the case.
 2. Festus reviews the case before the king:
 - d. Festus inherits the case of Paul from Felix (Acts 25:14).
 - e. Festus heard the Jews regarding Paul while in Jerusalem (Acts 25:15).
 - f. The Roman law forbids the sentence of death without the man’s accusers laying the case before his face (Acts 25:16).
 - g. Festus calls the Sanhedrin to Caesarea to make such a face to face accusation against Paul.

- h. The Jews come and the next day Festus sits on the judgment seat to oversee the trial (Acts 25:17).
 - i. Festus admits Paul's innocents by stating that when the Jews stood to condemn Paul, "*they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive*" (Acts 25:19).
 - j. Festus tells Agrippa that he was perplexed as to how to handle the case (Acts 25:20). What he really means to say is that he saw Paul's innocence yet he too saw the Jew's bitterness against Paul. Wanting to appease the Jews but not violate Roman law placed Festus in a real pickle of a situation. A true law abiding citizen would not find himself in this situation. He would state the law and say that is the end of the matter with no regards as to how it would affect his popularity.
 - k. Festus tells Agrippa that he had made a request to judge Paul at Jerusalem; however, Paul refused the request and made an appeal to Caesar.
3. Agrippa determines to hear Paul's defense for himself.
- IV. Felix introduces Paul to King Agrippa, Bernice, chief captains, and principle men of the city (no Jews present) (25:23-27):**
- A. "*So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing with the chief captains and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in*" (25:23).
 - 1. The king, his sister, the governor of Palestine, chief captains (i.e., military leaders who oversaw 1,000 Roman Soldiers – see Acts 22:28), and principle men of the city all gathered to hear Paul at the "*place of hearing.*"
 - 2. Jesus had told Ananias that Paul would "*bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel*" (Acts 9:15).
 - B. "*And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men who are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death: and as he himself appealed to the emperor I determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him*" (25:24-27).
 - 1. Festus' introduction of Paul to the nobles reveals the fact that he is a political prisoner. There are no charges that can possibly be levied against him that would be worthy of death or even prison (see Acts 26:31). Why is he being held? Festus continues to hold him because the Jews, the primary people of the providence Festus governs, have demanded his execution. To dismiss the case of Paul would be to fall out of favor with the majority of people he governed.
 - 2. Festus is at a loss of words to write in a report that will go with Paul to Rome. Nero will be the judge of Paul's case and Festus has no charges against him. Festus hopes that the king, and possibly other nobles present, will give him some idea as to what to write to Nero concerning Paul's charges. To send a prisoner to Rome from Caesarea with no charges would be construed by the Emperor as a waste of his time and government funds. Festus has found himself an early term dilemma with Paul.

Chapter 26
60 AD

- I. Paul's Fifth Defense (26 all):**
 - A. "*And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defense:*" (26:1).
 - 1. This is now Paul's fifth defense [the previous four defenses were found at Acts 22:1; 23:1-10; 24:10-21; and 25:6-8].

2. Festus has laid Paul's case before the nobles of Palestine and they are obviously chattering about the case. Paul, waiving his hand apparently to calm the crowd, begins his fifth defense.
- B. *"I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defense before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently"* (26:2-3).
1. Paul's joy was not due to his opportunity to express his innocence so that he may be set free but it was due to the opportunity he had to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the king of Palestine in the hope of converting his lost soul (see Acts 26:27-28). Paul apparently had been informed of Agrippa's knowledge regarding the Mosaic Law and the hope of the Messiah. Agrippa's knowledge is termed being "*expert*" (*gnostes*) by Paul; i.e., "one acquainted with a thing" (Moulton 80).
 2. Paul was excited to give answers regarding the accusations the Jews laid upon him due to Agrippa's acquaintance with the customs and questions among the Jews (see charges against Paul at Acts 24:5-6).
- C. *"My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee"* (26:4-5).
1. Paul begins his fifth defense before Agrippa in the same way in which he began his first defense at Acts 22:1 (trying to prove that he was no different than all other zealous Jews who did not accept Jesus as the longed for Messiah of the Old Testament). Paul was an educated Pharisee who was very zealous for the Law of Moses (see Acts 22:3).
 2. Paul tells Agrippa that many Jews, due to a previous relationship with Paul, could testify that this is true. Men such as the chief priest, elders, and fellow Pharisees that once knew Paul could certainly give testimony to this fact.
- D. *"And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?"* (26:6-8)
1. Paul shared the same zeal for the Mosaic Law and he also shared the same hope that the twelve tribes of Israel had regarding a coming Messiah and the hope to be raised from the dead never to die again (see Acts 3:22-26). The "*promise*," Paul speaks of, has already been addressed at Acts 13:16-39 and clearly identified as man's justification (i.e., the forgiveness of sins). We ought to all book mark this fact within our minds for future studies. The people of God in the OT not only had a knowledge of future justification, resurrection, and eternal life but they earnestly served God night and day in hopes of one day receiving these things through the Messiah (see study # 101; The Hope of Old Testament People).
 2. Due to the hope of salvation and the resurrection of the dead, the same hope that all faithful Jews always had, he now stands accused and faces a condemning judgment of death. Paul thereby states to Agrippa, who had knowledge of the Jews customs and laws, "*Why it is judged incredible with you if God doth raise the dead?*" If the resurrection of the dead and hope of salvation is the thrust of all the Jews hope what makes it so incredible that it has now come to pass in the God man Jesus Christ? Surely the king could see that the Jew's accusations were not consistent with their own professed hope.
- E. *"I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth"* (26:9).
1. Again, Paul was not unlike the accusing Jews in that he did not believe Jesus was the Christ. Not believing he did "*many things contrary*" to his name. Why would Paul follow the teachings of Christ if he did not believe that Jesus was the Christ. In all good conscience Paul disobeyed Christ.
 2. Herein is a great lesson on Bible authority. When someone does something "*in the name of one*" it is by that individual's authoritative will that the action is being done. When Paul did things contrary to the **name of Jesus** he was not following the deeds and will of Christ. Latter, the Apostle Paul would state, "*And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*" (Col. 3:17). Deeds, words, and actions

are under consideration here. God demands our obedience. That which we are to obey is His divinely revealed gospel message (see Rom. 6:16-23). Paul's life was not governed by divine authoritative revelation but rather by "*I verily thought*" (i.e., his opinions) (see also Acts 23:1) (See study # 25; Bible Authority). Note that just because Paul "*thought*" to do things contrary to Christ's authority did not make it right. One's personal conscience is not the standard that we are judged by (see study # 97).

3. What would make Paul a believer who turned from unrighteousness to authoritative living? Note, if Paul (one like the accusing and unbelieving Jews who once persecuted the church) could change and believe in Christ so can all else (see study # 104; How to Change the Erring).
- F. "*And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities*" (26:10-11).
1. Paul was thoroughly convinced that Jesus was not the Christ and that those who professed that he was were to be persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death. Paul was so zealous he was not satisfied with persecuting believers in his area but chased them all over the country.
 2. What would change the view of one so intensely convinced that Jesus was not the Christ?
- G. "*Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad*" (26:12-14).
1. Paul continues to explain to King Agrippa what it was that changed him from one who was not unlike his accusers in every way to one who now believed in and obeyed Jesus Christ.
 2. While Paul was on his way to Damascus to drag Christians back to Jerusalem to be tried and killed the Lord Jesus appears to him (the very Christ that he did not believe existed).
 3. What did this Jesus say to Paul? "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.*" The "*goad*" was "an instrument for guiding oxen... it consist of a rod about eight feet long, brought to a sharp point and sometimes cased with iron at the bigger end, to clear the plow of clay."⁷ Paul's persecution of Christ and his church was a work that Jesus depicted as fighting against a goad. Paul was fighting a losing battle. No matter how much he persecuted the church it would grow. Like the Hebrews of old that God multiplied so was the church. Moses records, "*But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad*" (Ex. 1:12) (see study # 38; Church Growth).
- H. "*And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee*" (26:15-16).
1. One can only imagine the feeling of guilt, stupidity, and anguish Paul must have felt the moment the Lord said, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" Paul had been truly convinced that the Jesus, of the sect of the Nazarenes, was not the Christ. He was so convinced that he persecuted and had these people killed (this would latter bother him immensely – see I Cor. 15:9).
 2. Paul would now be changed and the Lord's mission for him was that he change the minds of others who have rejected him.
- I. "*delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me*" (26:17-18).
1. Paul would be armed with the gospel of Jesus Christ. His mission was to "*open the eyes*" of those who disbelieved as he once did not believe. We asks the question, "What will cause people like Paul to change?" The answer is here. It is the gospel message that has the power to change men's hearts and minds (See Rom. 1:16) (see study # 104; What will make the unbelieving Believe?).

⁷ Unger M. F. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary pg. 480

2. When man's eyes are open to the reality of Jesus being the Christ they will be instructed to "*turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.*" Remember, the context suggest that the authoritative will of Jesus Christ is under consideration (see Acts 26:9, 15, and 17). To walk in ways other than by the name of Jesus Christ is to walk in darkness and in the power of Satan (see study # ; Bible Authority). To walk by the authoritative will of Christ is to walk in light and turn to God (see I Jn. 1:5-7). The gospel of Jesus Christ will "*open their eyes*" (i.e., help them see the light or to be enlightened with understanding and faith) (see Eph. 1:17-18) (see study # ; What will cause the Unbelieving to Believe?). **Those who believe are those who have opened their eyes and those who have opened their eyes are walking by the authoritative will of Christ (i.e., walking in the light of God)** (see study # 71; Bible Faith).
 3. Remember that it is God's "**promise**" that is under consideration in Acts 26. Paul is being accused and condemned for holding and teaching God's promise (see Acts 26:6-7). That "promise" is now identified as the "*remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.*" The gospel sanctifies (sets man apart from the world in that such are holy and without blemish), it opens men's eyes to the reality of one's existence, offers the forgiveness of sins, and brings one hope of an eternal inheritance through faith in Jesus Christ (see study # ; The Gospel).
- J. "*Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance*" (26:19-20).
1. Paul tells king Agrippa that seeing that the Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus and gave him a heavenly command to open the eyes of all men he could in no way be "*disobedient unto the heavenly vision.*" What Paul once tried to destroy he now is commanded to build. Paul, being the zealous and devout man that he was, immediately went to work to convince both Jew and Greek that Jesus is truly the Christ. Men and women who once disbelieved would come to believe in Jesus through the preaching of the gospel message (see study #).
 2. **Note the association** between having one's "*eyes opened*" to the fact that Jesus is the Christ (i.e., **faith / belief** in Jesus), **repentance** of walking in darkness and in the power of Satan, with **obedience** (i.e., "*works worthy of repentance*" / ex. See II Pet. 1:1-11). This has been the thrust of the book of Acts (see Acts 14:1-2 for a prime example – see also Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:48; 13:12; 13:38-39). Believers are people who have heard, believed, repented of sins, confessed Jesus as the Christ, baptized for the remission of sins, and remaining faithful (see study # Bible Belief).
- K. "*For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles*" (26:21-23).
1. Paul now brings the king back to the discussion at hand; i.e., why he presently wears chains and has been placed in a Roman prison. Paul is in prison simply because he preaches that Jesus is the Christ, that he has been crucified and raised from the dead. Paul preaches that man can be justified from their sins (something that could not take place under the Mosaic system).
 2. The prophets, that the accusing Jews claim to believe, have foretold of all that the Christ would suffer and of his resurrection (i.e., even Moses – see Acts 3:22ff). Jesus fulfilled all prophecies that the prophets of old had foretold of the Messiah (see Lk. 24:44; Acts 3:17-18; 13:16-40). Paul's accusers, like he at one time before seeing Jesus, do not believe that Jesus is the Christ even though all evidences point directly to him (see also Acts 2:22). That which would help them see the truth, as will help all, would be preaching ("proclaim light") such as that did by the Christ (see study #).
- L. "*And as he thus made his defense, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad. But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. For the king knows of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner*" (26:24-26).

1. Festus, apparently hearing of the resurrection of the dead for the first time (see Acts 25:19), could not contain himself any longer. Paul's message of the Christ, man's obedience, and salvation were words of a mad man. The word "*mad*" (beside thyself – KJV) (Greek - *mainomai*) = "to be disordered in mind, mad, insane" (Moulton 256). Festus truly thought Paul's message to be the craziest thing he had ever heard.
 2. Paul responds very respectfully to Festus, due to his authoritative position, saying that he is not mad but rather his words are the truth from one who is sober in mind (see study # 102; Respecting Positions of Authority). Paul turns to the king to prove his point of sanity. King Agrippa has also heard of all the things whereof Paul speaks. The king of a province as large as Palestine could in no way not know about the Christ, his crucifixion, and resurrection.
- M. "*King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am except these bonds*" (26:27-29).
1. Paul was excited to speak to Agrippa because of his prior knowledge of the Jewish customs and questions among the Jews which we now know clearly included a knowledge of the writings of the prophets regarding the Christ (see Acts 26:3). **Agrippa came to hear an interesting case in Paul yet did not expect to be preached to and put on the spot.** Paul asks the King, "Do you believe the writings of the prophets regarding the Christ?" Like much of Paul's writings in his letter to the Romans he answers the question he poses to the king himself. Paul states, "*I know that thou believest.*" Agrippa finds himself in the same state as Paul before he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus as well as the accusing Jews (i.e., these all had knowledge of the writings of the prophets regarding the Christ yet had not professed that Jesus was the Christ). It seems apparent that Paul's point in answering for the king is that not only Agrippa and the Jews but also his own self, before he was converted, had an extensive knowledge of the writings of the prophets. This knowledge, when applied properly, could in no way deny that Jesus was the Christ because he met all their forecast for the Messiah (see also Acts 2:22). To deny that Jesus was the Messiah was to be dishonest with one's self and of low character. Those who have facts of a case before their eyes yet deny justice are unjust (see study # 89).
 2. Agrippa finally answers Paul saying, "*With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian.*" The NKJVB states, "*You almost persuade me to become a Christian.*" Agrippa knew, from Paul's defense, that becoming a Christian meant not only a faith in Jesus Christ but also repentance of dark deeds of Satan and a life of obedience. Agrippa was apparently not willing to give up his life of sin.
 3. Paul knew this and thereby states that his great desire would be that not only would Agrippa, and all the nobles hearing him this day, almost be a Christian but rather make the conscientious decision to be a whole Christian (to be as Paul – a faithful saint of God).
- N. "*And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar*" (26:30-32).
1. The meeting adjourns with no one being baptized for the remission of sins.
 2. While Festus saw that Paul was not guilty of any crime deserving death (see Acts 25:25) Agrippa saw that Paul was not even deserving of being in bonds (i.e., prison).
 3. It does not appear that Festus received any help as to what to write the Emperor regarding Paul's guilt (see Acts 25:26-27).

Chapter 27

60 AD

I. Paul's Fourth Tour of Preaching: Stage 1 of 4 (27:1-5):

- A. *“And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band” (27:1).*
1. We are not told how long Paul remained in the Caesarean prison after the discussion with King Agrippa in Acts 26. If it was not long then the current year would be 60 AD.
 2. At a set time Festus transports Paul, with other prisoners, to Rome. Paul was to be under the watchful eye of a *“centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band.”* As discussed previously, a centurion is a military man who was responsible for one hundred Roman soldiers. Smith’s Bible Dictionary defines the “Augustan band” by saying, “The Roman army was divided into legions, the number of which varied considerably from 3000 to 6000, each under six tribune (chief captains – Acts 21:31), who commanded by turns. The legion was subdivided into ten cohorts (bands – Acts 10:1), the cohort into three maniples, and the maniple into two centuries, containing originally 100 men, as the name implies, but subsequently from 50 to 100 men, according to the strength of the legion. There were thus 60 centuries in a legion, each under the command of a centurion... the head quarters of the Roman forces in Judea were at Caesarea” (pp. 56). It seems that no definite information exist regarding the *“Augustan band.”* The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary states that it may have been a cohort designed as a private body guard for the emperor of Rome.
- B. *“And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his friends and refresh himself” (27:2-3).*
1. The *“Adramyttium”* ship that Paul, Aristarchus, and Luke board was bound for the *“coast of Asia;”* however, its first stop was Sidon (a city located approximately 67 miles North of Caesarea). “Adramyttium is an important seaport located on the northwest coast of the Roman province of Asia, at the head of the Gulf of Adramyttium, facing the island of Lesbos” (ISBE v. 1, pp. 57) (see map below).
 2. We had learned of Aristarchus at Acts 19:29 (one apprehended by the angry mob in Ephesus) and a traveling companion of Paul’s (Acts 20:4). Luke, once again, inserts himself into the text by the simple use of the first person plural pronoun *“we.”*
 3. Julius, the Roman centurion, permitted Paul to have free discourse with his friends Luke and Aristarchus once the ship reached Sidon.
- C. *“And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because of the winds were contrary” (27:4).*
1. The Adramyttium ship leaves the port of Sidon and travels with difficulty in a Northwest direction. The wind was out of the west, which made westward travel difficult. The *“contrary”* winds were winds directly at the ship.
 2. To avoid the powerful westerly winds, the ship travels northward under the *“lee of Cyprus.”* The *“lee”* is simply the side of the landmass that provides shelter from wind.
- D. *“And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia” (27:5).*
1. After traveling around the NE corner of Cyprus, the ship bears into the wind heading due west. Passing Cilicia and Pamphylia, the ship arrives at Myra (a city of Lysia) after an approximate two hundred miles of sailing into the wind. Please see map of fourth tour below for details of this trip. The Adramyttium ship had now taken the prisoners as far as it intended.
 2. How does a sailboat sail directly into the wind? A sailing ship can sail directly into the wind by a method called “tacking.” Tacking is a sailing maneuver where the boat sails in a zig zag manner keeping the head winds at 30 to 90 degree angle to the sails. But how does an angular wind cause

the boat to go forward into the wind? “Since the boat is dependent on the wind for propulsion, the strength of the wind and the area of the sail used to catch the wind obviously play a part – but how does a wind at right angles to the boat allow the boat to move forward? “This is accomplished with a bit of **vector mathematics**. The wind is the large force vector in the equation. As the wind pushes at approximate right angles to the boat, the boat’s large keel (underwater wing shaped centerboard), poses a very large drag force against the boat being pushed in the direction of the wind. Since the keel is aligned with the length of the boat, the boat really wants to travel forward, and the resultant thrust vector is in that direction. The shape of the sail also provides forward thrust. As the triangular sail inflates with a wind it creates an airfoil shape. As subsequent wind passes around the sail (airfoil), negative pressure is induced out front of and on the leeward side of the sail. This in turn causes surrounding air to rush into the sail and propel the boat further. This sail/airfoil action is compounded, as the boat travels faster, the wind around the sail creates more negative pressure, causing the boat to travel faster causing more negative pressure and so forth” (www.physlink.com [a physics question and answer webpage]).

II. Stage 2 of Paul’s Fourth Preaching Tour (27:6-12):

A. *“And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy; and he put us therein. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not further suffering us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, over against Salmone; and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea” (27:6-8).*

1. The prisoners board another ship of Alexandria whose purpose was to sail to Italy. The Adramyttium ship remained at Myra for an unspecified time before heading north through the Aegean Sea to its destination of Adramyttium (near the island of Lesbos).
2. The Alexandrian ship left the harbor of Myra and labored along very slowly directly into the wind until they reached Cnidus. The westerly winds were so difficult to manage in a westward direction that the ship sought shelter from whatever island it could. The ship turns south from Cnidus heading to Crete to sail under its lee as they had successfully done with Cyprus. With great difficulty the ship lands at Fair Havens. It seems that the captain of the Alexandrian ship was determined to reach his destination.



- B. *“And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, and said, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul”* (27:9-11).
1. The trip to Italy has gone from experiencing very annoying winds to downright dangerous. Luke now gives us a better understanding as to why the crew was facing these dangerous conditions upon the Mediterranean Sea. He tells us that it was the time of the *“fast.”*
 - a. The *“fast”* is another name for the **Day of Atonement**. It was called the *“fast”* because it was a day of *“afflicting the soul”* without eating so as to prepare oneself to receive expiation of sins committed against the Lord.
 - b. Leviticus 16:29ff gives the time the Day of Atonement celebrated (i.e., **the seventh month on the tenth day – corresponding to our September**). *“It was the time of the autumnal equinox, and when the navigation of the Mediterranean was esteemed to be particularly dangerous, from the storms which usually occurred about that time. The ancients regarded this as a dangerous time to navigate the Mediterranean”* (Barnes Notes – Book of Acts - pp. 360).
 2. The captain of the ship likely had never intended their voyage to take this long and now found themselves at sea during the worst time of the year.
 3. Paul apparently overhears Julius and the captain of the ship discussing whether to continue the voyage and thereby takes the opportunity to say, *“Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives.”* The Alexandrian ship had a load of cargo termed *“lading”* (wheat). Paul says that the load of wheat is in jeopardy of being lost as well as the ship and all their lives if they continue.
- C. *“And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, and winter there; which is a haven of Crete, looking north-east and south-east”* (27:12).
1. As the Alexandrian ship approaches Fair Havens the captain notes that the port was not *“commodious to winter in.”*
 2. To be *“not commodious”* (*haneuthetou*) = “unsuitable” (NM 592). What made this port unsuitable for staying through the winter is hard to say. There may have been no place to park such a large ship, there may have not been accommodations for prisoners, there may have been any number of reasons the captain saw that it was not suitable to stay in through the winter.
- III. **Stage 3 of Paul’s Fourth Tour of Preaching (27:13-44):**
- A. *“And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo: and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and were driven”* (27:13-15).
1. The blasting winds subsided for a while and the captain of the Alexandrian ship saw this as an opportunity to push further west to Phoenix and over-winter there. Not long; however, after they had pulled their anchors up and sailing close to the coast of Crete, a horrid wind kicked up known as the *“Euraquilo.”* The Euraquilo winds were “gales” (Unger – 381). *“It probably was a wind blowing off Mt. Ida across the open Bay of Messaria on the southern coast of Crete. Ramsay comments that it was typical of that area for a gentle southerly wind to shift to a violent northerly wind”* (ISBE v. 3, pp. 551).
 2. The violent wind out of the North blew the ship southward away from Crete so fiercely that the sailors eventually give up trying to head back to land and just let the wind drive them southward.

- B. *“And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven”* (27:16-17).
1. The ship is driven by the wind as far south as Cauda (a small island about 50 miles due south of Phoenix). The captain takes advantage of the small island and uses its lee to protect them while they are able to *“secure the boat.”* This boat was a small lifeboat used to take men ashore. Apparently they were so confident that they would make it to Phoenix from Fair Havens that they never pulled the boat up. It had, thereby, been banging around the base of the ship while it was whipped by the wind. The men pull this boat up and secure it.
 2. The next order of business was to secure the main boat itself. Apparently the integrity of the ship had been breached and it was necessary to *“under-gird”* it. This was a method of holding the ship together by tying cables around the ship to hold the planks in place. Apparently under-girding cables were standard equipment for ships sailing through the Mediterranean Sea and this Alexandrian ship was equipped with said cables.
 3. There was another source of potential danger that the ship faced that lurked off the northern coast of Africa known as the *“Syrtis.”* The *“Syrtis”* was a “wide but very shallow gulf whose danger to sailors was legendary. The fact that they (Paul and the Alexandrian Ship) were still very far away from Greater Syrtis illustrates the extent of the fear that the shallow waters and the quick sands of the gulf inspired” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 694).
 4. *“Lowering the gear”* or *“tackle”* (NM) (*skeuos*) = “mast of a ship, or sail” (Moulton 368). Young’s Literal Translation reads, they *“let down the mast.”* The mast is a vertical pole rising from the keel and supports the sails and running rigging (AHD 770). Apparently they lowered this pole so that the wind would stop pushing them so violently.
- C. *“And as we labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard; and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away”* (27:18-20).
1. The storm was so violent that the crew had lowered the mast, under-girded the ship, and now they begin to throw the ship’s freight (i.e., the wheat) overboard. Three days latter the crew throws the *“tackling”* overboard (furniture – ASV footnote). The *“tackling”* (*skeuen*) = A Greek word very similar to the Greek word used for *“gear”* or *“tackle”* (i.e., mast) as defined above. This word’s meaning is apparently adjacent to its context being used. It seems improbable that the crew would throw over the ship’s mast and sails. The more appropriate contextual meaning, according to Liddell and Scott, would be the ship’s “equipment, baggage, luggage, and or gear of the ship” (LS 732).
 2. Many days went by without the crew seeing the sun or stars. They had no idea where they were and they were taking a beating by the storm. Their hope of being saved faded and they concluded that they were doomed.
- D. *“And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. But we must be cast upon a certain island”* (27:21-26).

1. The sailors must have been exhausted and very hungry (they had been without food a long time). Paul thereby stands before this exhausted, hungry, and without hope crew and tells them they should have listened to him and remained at Fair Havens in Crete. Though this was not done he nonetheless had encouraging news.
 2. Paul gives the crew the first glimmer of hope and confidence that the crew has experienced for several days now. He tells them that not one person would lose their lives in this ordeal at sea. Paul's confidence was founded upon the fact that an angel of God had visited with him during the night and assured him of these things. Such a confident announcement at such dire times put the name of Jehovah God and His promises on the line within these men's mind. The Lord's promise to Paul was the only hope they could cling to. If the ship's crew made it safely to the small island without death then surely He is God.
- E. *"But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country: and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms; and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished for the day" (27:27-29).*
1. It seems that the fourteen days is not the time from leaving Caesarea unto the current time but rather the amount of time elapsed since Paul's statement of hope to the crew (see Acts 27:3, 7, 18-20).
 2. The "*Sea of Adria*" was the Adriatic Sea located due west of Macedonia and apparently stretched on out as far as the island of Malta. As the ship drifted in the Sea of Adria the sailors experienced indications of a nearby landmass. The men use a technique called "*sounding*" to determine the depth of the waters they sailed in. A line of rope with a weighted metal, such as lead, placed at its end would be tossed into the water, allowed to sink to the bottom of the ocean, and then measured. The sailors would usually mark the line by fathoms, much like a measuring tape, so that they did not have to keep pulling the line up and re-measuring it.
 3. Upon their first measure they found waters that were "*twenty fathoms*." One fathom is equal to six feet. Twenty fathoms would thereby be 120' deep. After a while they sound again and find "*fifteen fathoms*" (90' of water). They were obviously getting shallower and shallower.
 4. Fear strikes the crew and they toss out four anchors from the "*stern*" (i.e., rear part of the ship). The night retarded their vision and for all they knew they were facing horrendous rocks that would beat them to death.
- F. *"And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under color as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (27:30-31).*
1. The fear of crashing into the rocks and perishing moved some of the sailors to panic. They lowered the small boat that had been raised after being blown out to sea in hopes of sailing onto the shore safely. Their objective was to appear to be letting down anchors at the front of the ship (i.e., bow – foreship) but really they were trying to escape.
 2. Paul sees the men and warns the centurion that if these men leave the ship then no one would be safe (God had promised that all would be safe on his terms not on the terms of panic).
- G. *"Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, this day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you" (27:32-34).*
1. The crew has gone from ignoring Paul's advice to clinging with hope to his every word. When Paul said these men needed to stay in the boat the soldiers immediately cut the rope to the smaller boat and let it float away.
 2. The crew had been without food now for fourteen days (ever since Paul had given them hope of being saved). Paul knew the men would need strength to swim ashore and thereby advises them to

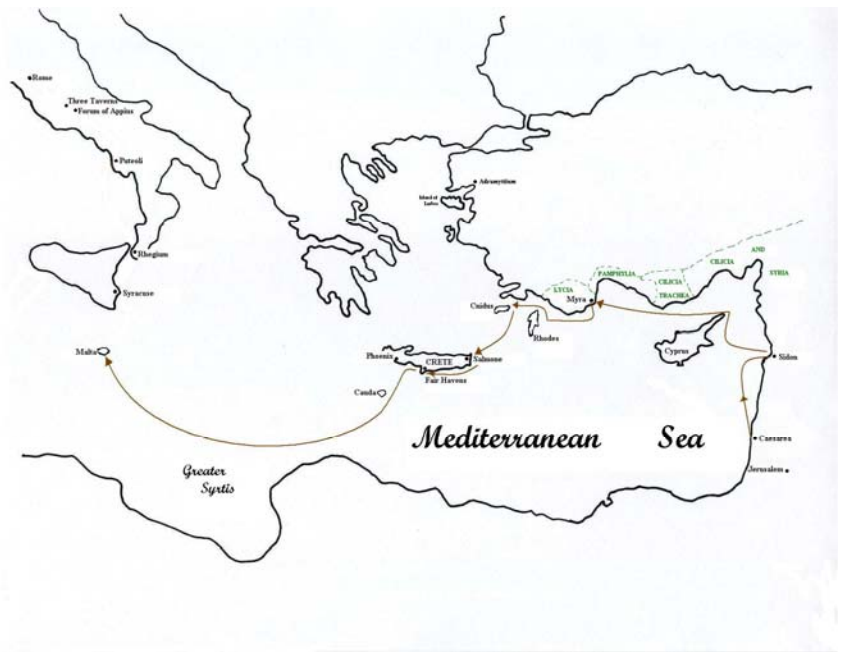
eat all the food they could and then throw the rest overboard. Once again Paul reaffirms the men's hope by saying, *"there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you."*

- H. *"Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. And we were in all in the ship two hundred and seventy six souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceive a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it"* (27:35-39).
1. Paul's reassuring words of comfort and hope caused the 276 souls upon the ship to be of *"good cheer."* The men eat the food and throw the rest of the wheat overboard.
 2. When day broke no one seemed to be able to identify the land mass that they were near (they were as lost as lost gets). Taking survey of the land they communed with each other to see whether they ought to run the ship into a bay that had a beach.
- I. *"And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves"* (27:40-41).
1. The sailors determine to make a run at the beach in the bay of Malta. They **first** cut loose the anchors and left them in the sea (obviously they had no intentions of going anywhere but this island).
 2. **Secondly**, they hoist the *"foresail"* (i.e., "the principle square sail hung to the foremast of a square-rigged vessel" [AHD 524]). This main sail enabled them to thrust forward toward their objective (i.e., the beach).
 3. The ship bore into the bay and headed toward the beach until the foreship (i.e., the bow or front of the ship) stuck firm in the sand. As the violent waves beat upon the stuck ship the *"stern"* (back of the ship) began to break up.
- J. *"And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; and the rest, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land"* (27:42-44).
1. When the soldiers aboard the ship saw the stern breaking apart in the wind, current, and waves they knew that the crew would soon be scattered. These soldiers were responsible for the slaves with their own lives and so determined to kill all of them to avoid their own punishment of allowing them to escape (see Acts 16:27).
 2. Julius manages to discourage the soldiers from killing the prisoners. The centurion appears to be somewhat fond and attached to Paul after all that they had been through. Julius commands all who could swim to get with it to the island while others could only seek out parts of the ship to float safely ashore with. The chapter ends with not one of the 276 men on the ship dying or being harmed at all. Paul was correct... God told him not one person would perish and they did not!

Chapter 28

- I. **Paul on the Island of Melita (Malta) (28:1-10):**
- A. *"And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarians showed us no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold"* (28:1-2).

1. Communicating with the barbarians of the island they crashed on helped them to identify the land mass as the island of Melita or Malta (see map). The “*barbarians*” (*barbaros*) = “Not Greek, foreign, originally all that were not Greeks, specially the Medes and Persians; so the Hebrews called the rest of mankind Gentiles. From the Augustan age however the name was given by the Romans to all tribes which had



no Greek or Roman accomplishments” (LS 146). “The Greeks used *barbaros* of any foreigner ignorant of the Greek language and the Greek culture, whether mental or moral, with the added notion, after the Persian war, of rudeness and brutality. Hence the word is applied in the NT, but not reproachfully” (Thayer 95).

2. These non Greek foreigners showed the 276 survivors uncommon kindness by warming and feeding them. Note the conditions... it was cold and rainy.
- B. *“But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous creature hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet justice hath not suffered to live”* (28:3-4).
1. Paul was helping others gather fire wood for the warming fire when a venomous snake comes out of the heated area of the fire and latches onto his hand.
 2. The barbarians, knowing the venomous species of the snake, figured that Paul must have been an unjust man guilty of something like murder that “*justice*” had not permitted him to live (in other words, he is getting what he deserves). Here we find not a god but rather a principle (i.e., justice) that man answers to.
- C. *“Howbeit he shook off the creature into the fire, and took no harm. But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god”* (28:5-6).
1. Paul shakes off the snake into the fire and no harm comes to him. The barbarians watch Paul with eyes of expectation. They expected Paul to swell up and suddenly fall down dead yet neither happened.
 2. After watching Paul and observing no ill effects from the deadly creature they begin changing their minds. Paul was not a man who had escaped justice in the deadly sea and was now getting what he deserved but rather he was a god who could not be harmed by venomous animals that had the bite to kill all other mortals.
 3. Said events remind us of the Lord’s statement to his disciples when he said that they would, “*take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover*” (Mark 16:18).
- D. *“Now in the neighborhood of that place where lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius; who received us, and entertained us three days courteously. And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. And when this was done, the rest also that had diseases in the island came, and*

were cured: who also honored us with many honors; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed” (28:7-10).

1. Publius was the “*chief man of the island*” (sort of a president of the people). This leader of the people of Malita “*entertained*” the 276 ship wrecked men for three days. The Nestle and Marshal text reads “welcome” rather than “entertained” (see NM page 598). The Greek word used is “*hanadezamenos*” = “to receive with hospitality” (Moulton 21). Publius obviously provided lodging and food for the visitors for three straight days.
2. Publius’ father was, at that time, suffering sickness of fever and dysentery. Paul, having been a recipient of Publius’ hospitality, kindly returned the favor to the chief of the island by healing his ailing father. So miraculous was this healing that word spread quickly of Paul’s divine abilities. All others upon the island of Melita who had sickness and disease came to Paul for healing.
3. Publius; consequentially, “*honored Paul and his companions with many honors.*” The idea of “*honoring*” (*timais*) one is to “value, estimate of worth... a thing of price... precious things... substantial value, real worth... honor state of honor, dignity... honor conferred, observance, veneration...” (Moulton 405). Apparently Publius and the islanders of Melita considered Paul and his companions as people of high value, honor, and dignity. Paul had made a great impression upon these islanders and no doubt he preached the gospel to them.

II. Paul, the prisoners, and Roman Soldiers head for Rome (28:11-15):

- A. “*And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was the Twin Brothers*” (28:11).
 1. Three winter months are spent on the island of Malta before attempting to sail to Rome. The crew finds a ship of Alexandria (region of Egypt) that was on its way to Italy as were they and so they were able to board it.
 2. The Alexandrian ship had a “*sign*” (*parasemos*) = “a distinguishing mark; an ensign or device of a ship” (Moulton 306). This particular Alexandrian ship sailed under the mark or flag of the “*Twin Brothers.*” The Greek word for this title is *dioskouroi* meaning, “the name given to Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Zeus and Leda, tutelary deities of sailors” (Thayer 152).
- B. “*And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli; where we found brethren, and were entreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome*” (28:12-14).
 1. The crew set sail traveling northward making a stop at Syracuse. Syracuse was an East Coast city of the island of Sicily. The crew remained at Syracuse for three days. After their short stay in Syracuse, the ship sailed for Rhegium by way of “*circuit*” {“Navigating” (Thayer 502)}.
 2. Puteoli was about 100 miles south of Rome. Though Paul had never been to these locations the gospel had been preached there with success.
- C. “*And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came o meet us as far as the Market of Appius and The Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage*” (28:15).
 1. While in Puteoli, the brethren in Rome gained intelligence that Paul was coming. These brethren were so excited to see him that they went out to meet him. One group made it to “*Market of Appius*” and another group of Christians met them at “*The Three Taverns.*”
 2. Here are three separate groups of Christians mentioned in and around Rome which sheds light on Romans 16.

III. Paul and Luke arrive in Rome (28:16-31):

- A. “*And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him. And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought whereof to accuse my nation. For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with me: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain*” (28:16-20).

1. Let us not forget that Paul remains a prisoner of the Romans. He has a guard attached to him at all times. Paul, fearing that the Jews had received word about his arrival and supposed guilt, calls upon the chief Jews to hear his side of the story.
 2. Paul had been accused of stirring up riots among the Jews throughout the world, being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, and profaning the temple of Jehovah by bringing a Gentile (Trophimus) into it (see Acts 24:5-6).
 3. Paul delivers his sixth defense before the Jews of Rome (the previous five are now listed):
 - a. Before the angry mob in Jerusalem after being apprehended by the Romans (Acts 22 all).
 - b. Before the Sanhedrin Council (Acts 23:1-10).
 - c. Before Felix and the Jews (Acts 24:10-21).
 - d. Before Festus (Acts 25:8-12).
 - e. Paul stands before Agrippa, Festus, and other Roman officials (Acts 26:1-28)
 4. Paul tells these Roman Jews that the reason he is held in bonds is because he preached about the “*hope of Israel*.” The hope of Israel is none other than the high expectation of the coming Messiah that the OT prophets foretold would come to save man from the consequences of their sins. This hope of Israel included man’s resurrection from the dead. Paul had previously stated this fact (see Acts 23:6; 24:15, 21; 26:20-23) (see study # 98; Resurrection).
- B. *“And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against”* (28:21-22).
1. Seeing that it took Paul quite a while to get to Rome from Judea through horrid conditions there was really no way that anyone could have come that distance and delivered news of Paul’s supposed crimes against Judaism. The Jews tell Paul that this is the first they have heard of any trouble with their brethren and the Apostle. All they know is that their brethren have spoken against the claim of the sect of the Nazarenes that the Messiah has come and that all men must obey his gospel.
 2. These Jews illustrate a nobler spirit than those of Jerusalem in that they are willing to hear out Paul regarding the “*hope of Israel*” and the sect of the Nazarenes.
- C. *“And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved”* (28:23-24).
1. Once again Paul is granted an audience to speak to regarding the “*hope of Israel*.” Paul would later write, from this Roman imprisonment, about these experiences saying, *“Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear”* (Phil. 1:12-14).
 2. Paul preaches to the Jews:
 - a. He tells the Jews about the “*kingdom of God*” (i.e., the church that Jesus spoke of [see I Thess. 2:12 compared to II Thess. 2:13-14; Col. 1:13-14; etc.]).
 - b. Paul proves, through the Mosaic Law and the writings of the Prophets, that Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of God’s promise to send a Messiah (see study # 14 and # 29).
 - c. Paul spoke with the Jews from morning till evening (at least 8 hours of reasoning).
 3. When all was said and done there were some who believed and some who did not believe (see study # 89). Those who believed no doubt were baptized for the remission of their sins and purposed to live faithfully to the Lord all their lives in the hope of being resurrected from the dead and existing into eternity with God (see Acts 13:38-39).
- D. *“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of*

hearing, and their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them” (28:25-27).

1. The last recorded words of the Apostle Paul, in the book of Acts, are a quote from Isaiah 6:9-10. No OT scripture is quoted more than Isa. 6:9-10 in the NT (cf. Matt. 13:14, 15; Mk. 4:12; Lk. 8:10; Jn. 12:40; Acts 28:26, 27; Rom. 11:8; II Cor. 3:14) (see study # 5; Inspiration – Holy Spirit “*spake through Isaiah*” i.e., the words of Isaiah were of a divine origin).
 2. Isaiah experienced the same condition of heart in his day. The antecedent to the pronoun “*them*” are those who see but do not see and hear but do not hear. Isaiah identifies the source of their problem: “*For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes have they closed.*”
 - a. A heart that is “*waxed gross*” (*pachuno*) = “Thick, stout, fat; of things, thick, massive, thick witted, gross, dull, stupid” (LS 614).
 - b. Their ears are “*dull of hearing*” (*bareos*) “heavy to bear, grievous, burdensome, oppressive, wearisome” (LS 147).
 - c. Their “*eyes have they closed*” (*kammuno*) “to shut or close the eyes, hence to drop asleep, doze” (LS 411).
 2. A clear attitude toward truth is revealed by Jesus. There are those who do not understand truth because God’s commands are a burden and oppressive. Through their lack of fear of God they display stupidity (being ‘thick headed’) in seeking the things of this world rather than hearing, understanding and following God’s instructions (cf. I Jn. 2:15-17). If only man would open his eyes and ears to God He would certainly heal them of their sin sick ways.
- E. “*Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear. And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him*” (28:28-31).
1. Seeing that many of the Jews rejected the gospel message Paul, as was his custom, turned to the Gentiles (see Acts 18:6).
 2. Luke does not tell us what happened with Paul’s appeal to Caesar of Rome. We are left with the fact that Paul spends two years in a rented house under guard of the Romans as a prisoner. The final dates of the book of Acts would therefore be around 63 AD (Paul left Judea at 60 AD after spending two years in a Caesarean prison – Acts 24:27). The final tour of Acts would be from 60 to 63 AD which means that Paul remained a prisoner for five straight years. During the last two years of his imprisonment he did the following:
 - a. Preaching about the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. Secondly, he wrote four epistles during this time:
 - i. The book of Ephesians (see Eph. 6:20-22).
 - ii. The book of Philippians (see Phil. 1:7, 13-16).
 - iii. The book of Colossians (see Col. 4:7-8 compared to Eph. 6:21-22).
 - iv. Philemon (Philem. 1:10-12 compared to Col. 4:7-8 and Eph. 6:21-22).
 - v. Possibly the book of Hebrews (see Heb. 13:23).

Appendix I

Holy Spirit

Introduction:

The apostle Paul instructed his beloved friend and evangelist Timothy not to teach any other doctrine than that which is “*sound*” (I Tim. 1:3-11). The word sound means “to be sound, to be well, to be in good health: metaphorically the phrase is used of one whose Christian opinions are free from any admixture of error (Titus. 1:13), the sound i.e. true and incorrupt doctrine (I Tim. 1:10; II Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1)” (Thayer 634). Jesus tells us that there are two sources of authoritative teaching, one from Heaven (God) and another from man (Matt. 21:23-27). When discussing the Holy Spirit, this topic can be handled no differently than any other topic in God’s word. We must leave our own ideas and conceptions behind and look to the word of God. The sound words of our faith reveal all that we shall speak regarding topics such as the Holy Spirit (Cf. I Pet. 4:11). With the authoritative scriptures before us, let us discuss the Holy Spirit.

Identity of the Holy Spirit

Early in the pages of God’s word the plural identity of God is revealed. Moses records, “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*” (Gen. 1:26-27). When we read “*In the beginning God...*” (Gen. 1:1) it is understood that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were present and had a part in creation (cf. Gen. 1:26; Job 26:13; Ps. 104:30; Jn. 1:1-3, 14-15, 26-30; Col. 1:13-20; Heb. 1:1-2, 10; Rev. 4:8-11)

Jesus had appeared to the eleven disciples after his resurrection and said, “*All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” (Matt. 28:18-19). The Father, Son (i.e., Jesus), and the Holy Spirit comprise the “godhead” (Col. 2:9). The word “godhead” (Greek *theios*) is defined as “divinity” by Moulton’s Analytical Greek Lexicon and “the essential and divine nature of God” by the American Heritage Dictionary pp. 565. A essential and divine characteristic of “God” is thereby the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is naturally referred to as God in the scriptures. Peter had once said to a lying Ananias, “*Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*” (Acts 5:3-4). A cross study of the synoptic accounts of the life of Christ by Matthew and Luke prove the Holy Spirit to be God too (see Matt. 12:28 and Luke 11:20). David further solidifies the deity of the Holy Spirit by revealing his omnipresence (see Ps. 139:7). Though the Holy Spirit is God he is certainly distinct and separate from the other two individuals in the godhead; i.e., Jesus and the Father. The Holy Spirit is one (Eph. 4:4).

The individuality of the Holy Spirit is depicted in his characteristics and actions. The Word of God explains that the Holy Spirit can be lied to (Acts 5:3), tried (Acts 5:9), grieved (Isa. 63:1; Eph. 4:30), and resisted (Acts 7:51). The Holy Spirit has the ability to hear (Jn. 16:13) and speak (I Tim. 4:1). He comforts (Acts 9:31), brings joy to man (Acts 13:52), and helps us pray at times when we are overwhelmed (Rom. 8:26).

Though the Holy Spirit is a distinct individual in the godhead he is one with the Father and Son. The apostle Paul wrote, “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all*” (Eph. 4:4-5). The “oneness” of the godhead is no mystery at all. Many are confused over the idea of three equaling one and thereby exclaim, “The trinity doctrine is a deep and mysterious idea that is impossible for mortal minds to comprehend.”

Such a statement reveals more of a deep and mysterious ignorance of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit, Jesus, and the Father comprise the one *theios* in that they are one in purpose. Jesus prayed about the oneness of not only the godhead but also all believers through the sanctification of truth (see Jn. 17:17ff). The purpose of the godhead and all true Christians is that of being opposed to sin and united in truth (Eph. 4:1-4). Said unity is perfect and unsoiled by all who are likeminded with the godhead (Rom. 15:5-6; I Cor. 1:10).

Work of the Holy Spirit

Seeing that the Holy Spirit is one in purpose with the Father and Son it stands that their unified priority is the **sanctification** of mankind (see Jn. 17:17). Divine revelation makes manifest the dire need for man's separation from sin. "*Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord*" (Heb. 12:14). The Holy Spirit's work is to bring man to sanctification and a true hope of eternal salvation. Man must thereby be convicted of sin and made to feel the sting of guilt for sanctification to occur.

A Distribution of Power

The Old Testament speaks of the Spirit of the Lord endowing people with super human strength (Judges 14:6-19), courage (Micah 3:8), and knowledge of things that were not previously known (II Sam. 23:2; Isa. 61:1; Ezek. 11:5). When Moses led Israel out of Egypt he did so by the strength, courage, and knowledge of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:11-14; Hag. 2:5; Rom. 9:17). The Holy Spirit's power "*fell upon*" (Ezek. 11:5) and "*entered into*" (Ezek. 2:1-2) men to speak and perform divine works. Man's sanctification has ever been the directive of these powers. The Lord prophesied of a time when He would pour forth his Holy Spirit upon mankind that they may speak words of eternal salvation and perform powerful signs to confirm truth and establish His sanctified church (Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17, 33).

The New Testament also reveals how that the Holy Spirit came upon men that they may do things otherwise humanly impossible. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit by God that he may preach divine revelation and perform powerful miracles of healing the lame and sick (Lk. 4:18ff; Acts 10:38). God "*supplied*" the Holy Spirit to many who heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ and thereby endowed them with divine power to perform miracles (see Gal. 3:5). The apostles and prophets were endowed with powers to perform miracles and teach divine revelation through the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:19-20; I Cor. 2:4; Eph. 3:5). The Holy Spirit "*moved*" some to speak and act for the sanctification of mankind (II Pet. 1:21).

These miraculous powers are termed "*gifts or distributions of the Holy Spirit*" at Hebrews 2:4. The apostle Paul explained that these gifts, or distributions of powers, varied from individual to individual. Some men received the miraculous ability to speak in tongues and some the ability to interpret the tongues. Some had the power to perform miracles and others had miraculous knowledge, wisdom, and faith (I Cor. 12:4-11). The function of all this power being distributed by the Holy Spirit to mankind was to cause amazement (Acts 3:10), compassionately heal (Matt. 14:14), and confirm the divine origin of the message being preached (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3). These three functions added up to man's sanctification.

There was clearly a time when the Holy Spirit endowed people with the power to perform miraculous powers and speak words that they had no previous knowledge of. The apostle Paul told the Corinthians; however, that this power would not always be exercised. Paul said, "*Love never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away*" (I Cor. 13:8-10). Paul states that as long as divine revelation remained incomplete the powers of the Holy Spirit upon man will continue. Whenever revelation was completed and man had all divine knowledge at his disposal the powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit, through man, would cease. The apostle Peter later wrote, "*Seeing that his divine **POWER** hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue*" (II Pet. 1:3). James too would later write of the "*perfect*" (i.e., complete) law of liberty (James 1:25). Jude writes, "*Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for all delivered** unto the saints*" (Jude 3). The reason the Holy Spirit does not give, distribute, or pour out divine powers of miraculous abilities today is because this phase of his work is complete (II Tim. 3:16-17). Paul stated that when the

Word of God was completed then these powers would end. Those who lay claims to miraculous abilities today are liars and the truth is not in them (continued on pg. 3).

Work of the Holy Spirit Today

The Holy Spirit succeeded in bringing the complete revelation to man bit by bit and confirming these truths by powers. This complete revelation of God continues to convict man of sin, righteousness, and judgment today (see Jn. 16:8). The Holy Spirit instructed men during the Old Testament days (Ps. 143:10; Neh. 9:20-30), New Testament days (Jn. 14:25-26; I Cor. 2:12-13) and he continues to do so today (Jn. 6:44-45; Eph. 4:20-24). The only way for man to know and achieve God's desired undefiled state of **sanctification** is to allow the Holy Spirit's work to bear fruit in our lives (Gal. 5:16-24).

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Let us clearly state, at the outset of this study, that when we read of the **indwelling** of the Holy Spirit in the Bible the thought is one of two events. First, the Holy Spirit filled individual was one who had been divinely endowed with abilities to heal, prophecy, speak tongues, or perform one of many miracles examined in I Corinthians 12 (see Lk. 1:67; Acts 2:4; Eph. 3:1-6). Secondly, we find that people today are commanded to be "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" apart from divine endowments of power (see Rom. 8:9-14; Eph. 5:18-19). Given that miraculous gifts have ceased to exist we are left to define the meaning of one being filled with the Holy Spirit in the year 2008 as is commanded in Romans 8:1ff.

If the indwelling of the HS is not the ability to perform miracles, speak words of prophecy, and or speak in tongues in the year 2008 then what is it? Consider the fact that Joseph was said to have the "Spirit of God" because of his knowledge (Gen. 41:39-40). Bezalel, the son of Uri, was filled with the Spirit of God in that he obtained wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in a miraculous manner (Ex. 31:1ff). Balaam was able to speak divine words of prophecy through being filled with the HS (Numb. 24:1ff). Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson were given the divine ability to judge Israel because they were "*filled with the Spirit of God*" (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6). Samuel (I Sam. 10:10), David (I Sam. 16:14), Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24; 36:27), Micah (Mic. 3:8), John (Lk. 1:15), Elizabeth (Lk. 1:41), the apostles (Jn. 14:17), and Jesus (Isa. 11:1-2; Matt. 3:16; Lk. 3:22; 4:1) all gained knowledge through the indwelling of the HS.

The scriptures reveal the fact that at the completion of divine revelation miracles would cease to exist (I Cor. 13:1ff). Seeing that the word of God is now complete miracles have ceased (Jude 3; II Pet. 1:3; James 1:25). If man can no longer gain divine revelation through the power of the Holy Spirit how do they receive it? The apostle Paul asked the Galatians a similar question and then answers it. Paul said, "*This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*" (Gal. 3:2). When the word of God was preached, heard, received, and obeyed man was receiving the Spirit of God (i.e., receiving divine words delivered by the Holy Spirit which in turn guided man into all truth). This explains why Paul commanded the Ephesian Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit and then explains that this filling of one's self with the Holy Spirit is none other than hearing, receiving, and obeying the word of God (see Col. 3:16). Without the Holy Spirit's involvement in revealing truth no man could even proclaim that "*Jesus is Lord*" (I Cor. 12:3).

Concluding Thoughts about the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

We may now clearly identify what it means to be "filled with the Holy Spirit." Being filled with the Holy Spirit during the days of incomplete revelation meant people were endowed with miraculous powers and knowledge. This power confirmed the divine origin of the truth being spoken (Mk. 16:20). Once all truth was delivered miraculous powers were no longer needed (I Cor. 13:1ff). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit; however, did not end. God's people are filled with the Holy Spirit today not miraculously but by diligent study and application of divine truths learned (II Tim. 2:15). To be filled with the HS is thereby the act of hearing, studying, receiving, obeying, and being **guided** by truth. The apostle Paul conclusively defines the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as being "*led by the Spirit of God*" in all areas of life (Rom. 8:14 see also Jer. 10:23). The Holy Spirit guides man today much like a set of instructions guides one through a building project or a road map guides one to a desired destination. Those who allow the Holy Spirit to guide them through life will never be lost.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Luke records Jesus' statements of promise to the Apostles in Acts 1:4-5 saying, "*Not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.*" Let us note that the "*promise of the Father*" is equated to the "*baptism of the Holy Spirit.*" This promise was given to the "*apostles*" (Acts 1:2). The identity of the "*promise of the Father*" is revealed in Luke 24. Luke defines this promise as the preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins and being "*clothed with power from on high*" (see Lk. 24:47-49). At Acts 1 the Apostles are tarrying in Jerusalem just as the Lord had commanded. They were waiting for the fulfillment of this promise. Jesus clearly states that the Apostles would "*Receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (Acts 1:8).

Identity of Holy Spirit Baptism

To examine the verses above is to clearly identify what baptism of the Holy Spirit is. The apostles were promised power to preach repentance, forgiveness of sins, and be a witness of Christ (i.e., His life, suffering, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension). This power came to them on the day of Pentecost as is recorded in Acts 2:1ff. The power was exhibited in their miraculous ability to speak in languages that they had no previous knowledge of. Their preaching was about Christ (life, suffering, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension) and how man can receive the forgiveness of sins (see Acts 2:14-38). Baptism in the Holy Spirit occurred to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Holy Spirit baptism is thereby equated to the Apostles newly acquired miraculous knowledge and power to speak other tongues that man may be sanctified.

Holy Spirit Baptism was for a Specific Time and Place

Jesus told the apostles that they would be immersed in the Holy Spirit "*not many days hence*" (Acts 1:5). The apostles received this **power** on the day of Pentecost and the year was about 33 AD (Acts 2:1-4). All prophecy regarding the Kingdom of God (the church) was then fulfilled. The apostles received Holy Spirit baptism as was promised and foretold by Jesus (Acts 1:4-5). The church was established (Isa. 2:1-4; Acts 2:38-41) and the law of God went forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1ff; Lk. 24:44; Acts 2:38). The sanctification of man was now realized and God's promises fulfilled (see Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:8, 16).

Are People Baptized in the Holy Spirit Today?

No! We have noted that Holy Spirit baptism is equated to the reception of power from God and the preaching of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and Jesus. The purpose of this **power** was to confirm the message and witness of Christ's life, suffering, death, burial, and resurrection as truth (see Mk. 16:20). Seeing that all truth for man's salvation has been revealed there remains no more need for confirming proofs of power to accompany preaching (see I Cor. 13:1ff). God has "*Granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue*" (II Pet. 1:3). God's word is perfect and complete and therefore needs no more inspired people with power to make new proclamations of revelation (II Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3; James 1:25).

“Given” the Holy Spirit

Preliminary Statements

The phrase, "**given the Holy Spirit**" is used a multitude of times in the New Testament. The apostle Peter, while on trial by the Sanhedrin Council for preaching in the name of Christ, uses this phrase. Peter said, "*The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him*" (Acts 5:30-32). Those who **obeyed** the command to

confess Christ, repent of sins committed, and be baptized for the remission of sins are those who have been “given” the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:22-47). What we must do to determine the full meaning of this phrase is to examine all associate passages and contexts where this is used.

An Inseparable Connection to the Work and Indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

The **work of the Holy Spirit** is the sanctification of mankind through the Word of God (Jn. 16:8ff). The word of God convicts sinners of wrong doing and drives them to seek or call out to Him for help (Acts 2:21). Luke tells us that all who would **seek** out God’s gifts of salvation shall be given the Holy Spirit (Lk. 11:10, 13). The one who seeks the very truths the Holy Spirit delivered will be given the Holy Spirit; i.e., the truths he or she seeks.

Those who seek and call out to God for help when convicted of sins find help in the instructions of truth. When man is guided by truth to their spiritual health they are deemed to have the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** (Rom. 8:1-14). This indwelling is something “given” by God through His word (see I Jn. 4:13).

We may now begin to connect some pieces of our puzzle. The **Holy Spirit is given to those who obey** God’s word (Acts 5:32), **seek** out God’s help through His word (Lk. 11:10, 13), and are **guided** by His word (Rom. 8 and I Jn. 4:13). Those who are given the Holy Spirit are those who **receive** the word of God as truth and they apply His principles and laws in their lives (see Jn. 14:15-17; Acts 15:6-9; II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; I Thess. 4:7-8; Heb. 6:4-5). While the Holy Spirit is not the Word of God, He is nonetheless metonymically equivalent to the word of God much like the name of Christ is at Colossians 1:25-27.

How are people “given the Holy Spirit?”

To summarize the above statements we find that those who receive the word of God as truth, seek its truths out, obey it, and are guided in life by it are those who have received the Holy Spirit. I make the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life evident to others by my speech and practices. You and I have been given the Holy Spirit when we accept, believe, and practice God’s truths.

Why is the Holy Spirit not given to Some?

When Jesus spoke in parables his disciples asked him why he did this. Jesus replied saying, “*Unto you it is **given** to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them **it is not given**. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath*” (Matt. 13:10-12). Jesus goes on to talk about their hardened hearts and lack of desire at Matthew 13:13-17. Those hardened in sin hear the gospel yet do not believe (Acts 28:23ff). Said people are not interested (Acts 2:12) and thereby they are unable to know truth (I Cor. 2:6-16). Not only do they voluntarily not know truth but they will not subject themselves to the laws of God (Rom. 8:7). The Holy Spirit is simply “*not given*” to them because they have “resisted” Him. God will twist no man’s arm. He offers His comforter (the Holy Spirit) to those who would hear, believe, and obey.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Preliminary Statements

There is a definite correlation between being given the Holy Spirit, having the Holy Spirit dwell within, and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is **given** to those who seek (Lk. 11:10), asks (Lk. 11:13) and obey the truth (Acts 5:32). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is “**given**” to those who are guided in their lives by gospel truths (I Jn. 4:13). The “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is **given** to those who answer the call of the gospel (Acts 2:38-39). All of these **gifts** are freely given to those who so desire to accept them through obedience (Rom. 6:16, 23). So, what is the “gift of the Holy Spirit?”

What do men say about the “Gift of the Holy Spirit?”

At Acts 2:38 Peter said, “*Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” H. Leo Boles said that “It seems that some of the early Christians received miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, and that this is what Peter meant” (pp. 48 / Commentary on Acts). The Pulpit Commentary states that this gift is the forgiveness of sins, justification, and sanctification of man (PPC v. 18, pp. 54). Lenski writes that the gift of the Holy Spirit is received by repentance and baptism. “The genitive is appositional; as in v. 33 the promise is the Holy Spirit, so here the gift is the Holy Spirit... it denotes the gift of grace and salvation which is always present in the heart which the Spirit enters” (Lenski on Acts, pp. 109). Johnny Stringer writes, “It is reasonable to interpret Peter’s promise regarding the gift of the Holy Spirit in the light of Joel’s prophecy, which he had quoted, regarding the Spirit’s coming to all flesh. That prophecy obviously had reference to the apostles and to Christians who would receive miraculous powers through the laying on of the apostle’s hands” (Truth Commentaries on Acts pp. 46). Albert Barnes writes, “The gift of the Holy Ghost here does not mean his extraordinary gifts, or the power of working miracles, but is simply means, you shall partake of the influences of the Holy Ghost as far as they may be adapted to your case... i.e., peace, calmness, and joy that the Spirit lends to give evidence that one is born again” (quote / paraphrase to shorten jcr, Barnes’ Notes pp. 54). J. W. McGarvey writes, “The gift of the Holy Spirit should not be confounded with the Holy Spirit’s gifts, nor with the fruits of the Spirit... It is analogous to the expression, ‘promise of the Holy Spirit,’ in verse 33, above, where Peter says, ‘having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has shed forth this which you now see and hear.’ The gifts of the Holy Spirit were various miraculous powers, intellectual and physical. These were conferred only upon a few individuals, while the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to all who repent and are immersed” (Acts pp. 44).

To summarize these author’s comments we find three primary beliefs. Some believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit is being endowed with miraculous powers. Secondly, others believe it to be an indwelling of calmness and peace. Thirdly, some write that it is the forgiveness (i.e., sanctification and justification).

Connecting associated Passages:

Consider these connecting passages. The forgiveness of sins through the act of repentance and baptism is directly connected to the “gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). All who hear and obey God’s call will receive the forgiveness of sins and the “gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38-39). We know that it is the gospel that calls men unto “*salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*” (II Thess. 2:13-14). Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:8ff). The Holy Spirit represents truth (Rom. 5:5). Those who hear the gospel call to sanctification and obey it are “given” the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32) because they asked (Lk. 11:13) and sought after it (Lk. 11:10). The apostle Peter states that those who “*repent and are baptized for the remission of their sins will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit... it is God’s promise... to as many as the Lord our God shall call*” (Acts 2:38-39). Jesus taught in his parable of the marriage feast that there are conditions to be met for one to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. His conclusion was, “*For many are called, but few chosen*” (Matt. 22:14). If then the call of God comes through the gospel and those who hear, believe, and obey it receive the Spirit and are sanctified from sin then it stands to reason that the gift of the Holy Spirit is this sanctification obtained by one’s hearing and obeying.

The Context of Acts 2:38

While it is sometimes helpful to read what others have written on difficult text in the Bible it is necessary that you and I draw conclusions based upon the context and other associated passages. We have considered the associated connecting passages above. Let us now consider the context of Acts 2:38.

The phrase, “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is made in the context of Peter proving that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus had lived, was crucified at the hands of lawless men, he was resurrected from the dead and ascended into the heavens. To affirm these statements as truth Peter miraculously spoke in a language that he had no previous training in. Many believed the stinging words of Peter and thereby asked **what they should do to remedy the situation of their sin**. Peter tells them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and “*ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him*” (Acts 2:38-39).

Conclusion:

The purpose of Peter's sermon in Acts two was not to empower men with miraculous abilities and neither was it Peter's aim to comfort people with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (though these two things would come to many). Peter's purpose of preaching this sermon was to reveal the law of God to man that they might be forgiven, justified, and sanctified (see Isa. 2:2-4; Lk. 24:44ff). This justification is termed "*the gift of the Holy Spirit*" and it is indeed **God's promise** to all who would call upon His name for help in their time of need against the eternal and damning consequences of sin (see Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:8, 16; Acts 13:23, 38). This forgiveness is certainly a "gift" to all who will seek, asks, and obey truth (see Rom. 5:15-18; 6:23; Eph. 3:8). We can thereby determine the meaning of the phrase "*gift of the Holy Spirit*" not only by connecting many dots together throughout the Bible but also by examining the context. Context and associated passage confer that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the forgiveness of man's sins.

Appendix II

A GUARENTEED Formula for Church Growth

What do you think the Lord is saying about our efforts to expand the borders of His glorious kingdom? Do you suppose He watches us and says, "Great Job" or is He saying, "I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). What is the church currently doing to save lost souls? Too often we do nothing but pray for new members of the body of Christ to move into our area. We sit back idly hoping someone will read our web site and take the Bible correspondence course. We sit back idly hoping to run across someone at work or play who would be willing to talk about Bible matters. We set up booths at city functions hoping someone interested in spiritual matters will come our way. We mail out Bible studies to prisoners in the local penitentiary. We go door to door in our neighborhoods hoping to run across someone who is willing to talk to us about the condition of their soul. We lay tracts out at restaurants hoping that someone will pick it up and read it. We rely on church member's children to obey the gospel so that we can say, "the kingdom is growing." We hold gospel meetings hoping someone will obey the gospel. We place ads in Newspapers, phonebooks, and various brotherhood magazines all with the hopes of evangelizing our areas. Though all this is done the church is stagnant. Anyone traveling on vacation and visiting a sound congregation will find a handful of saints meeting in towns across America. I suggest to all who have been using the above mentioned efforts, myself included, that this is NOT ALL the Lord intended when he said, "*Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Getting back to Bible Examples

Bible authority is established by direct command, inference, and examples. The book of Acts divinely delivers examples of church growth. The church added three thousand souls on Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Two thousand more souls were added after Peter and John were attending an "*hour of prayer*" at the temple (see Acts 3:1; 4:4). During these early days the "*number of the disciples was multiplying*" (Acts 6:1, 7). The Ethiopian eunuch was reading Isaiah when Philip found him (Acts 8:27ff). Saul was exceedingly zealous for God when Jesus appeared to him (Acts 9:1ff). Cornelius was a devout man who feared God (Acts 10:2). Paul preached his first recorded sermon at Antioch of Pisidia in the hearing of the synagogue (Acts 13:14, 42ff). Paul went to the synagogue located in Iconium (Acts 14:1), three straight Sabbaths at the synagogue of Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-3), he preached at the synagogue in Corinth every Sabbath (Acts 18:4), and the synagogue at Ephesus for two straight years (Acts 19:8-10). Paul, when first going to Macedonia, went directly to a place outside the city where women had gathered to pray (Acts 16:13). Paul re-baptized 12 of John's disciples (Acts 19:1-7). Are you starting to get the picture? The kingdom of God was growing because the target audience was people who already had at least an interest in God.

There is nothing wrong with going to the “synagogue” each week and challenging people’s faith (please do read Acts 13:42-44; 17:2; 18:4; 19:8).

The guaranteed formula for church Growth

The church is certainly to be commended for its efforts in the above mentioned areas (i.e., advertising, gospel meetings, door to door, etc.). Yet when we turn to the book of Acts we find that the church was growing by leaps and bounds because the gospel was being preached to people who already had a spiritual interest. If you and I are going to follow the examples set forth in the book of Acts then we need to get to the “synagogues and places of prayer.” We need to infiltrate the Bible studies of the Baptists, Methodist, Catholics, Presbyterians, Muslims, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and so forth. We need to get into these religious circles and present the truth to a people hungry for Bible preaching and teaching. We need to “GO into all the world...” rather than sitting back hoping that someone comes to our gospel meetings and so forth. When such “going” takes place the church buildings will not be able to contain the new members. The church’s elders will have their loads increased in that many will be, as the parable of the sower suggest, quick to start and quick to exit the church. The deacon’s work will expand. The evangelist will be edifying larger audiences and all members will be edified as we witness the church expanding as God intends. Bible authority in example will not fail. Let us all remember our own background. I came out of the Baptist church... what did you come out of? Surely you were not born a Christian. Brethren, lets get to work!

Appendix III

Paul’s Epistles (Acts: 33 AD to 63 {66} AD)

| BOOK REFERENCE | DATE | PLACE OF WRITING | BIBLE |
|-----------------------|-------------|---|--|
| I Thess. | 51 - 52 AD | Corinth | I Thess. 2:17ff |
| II Thess. | 53 AD | Corinth (around 2 years after I Thess.) | Acts 17:14-15; 18:11 I Thess. 3:1-3 |
| Galatians | 53 –54 AD | Corinth (Paul’s second tour) | Acts 15 / Gal. 1:6 |

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|---|--|
| I Corinthians | 56 AD | Ephesus (Paul's third tour) | I Cor. 16:8 |
| II Corinthians | 57 – 58 AD | Macedonia | II Cor. 1:8; 9:2; 12:1-2 |
| Romans | 58 AD | Corinth (Paul's third tour) | Rom. 15:25-28 |
| Ephesians | 62 – 63 AD | Rome (While in Prison) | Eph. 6:20 |
| Philippians | 62 – 63 AD | Rome (While in Prison) | Phil. 1:7, 13-16 |
| Colossians | 62 – 63 AD | Rome (While in Prison) | Col. 4:7-8 as compared to Eph. 6:21-22 |
| Philemon | 62 – 63 AD | Rome (While in Prison) | Philem. 10-12 compared to Col. 4:7-8 and Eph. 6:21-22 |
| *Hebrews | 63 AD | Rome (end of 1 st imprisonment) | Heb. 13:23 |
| I Timothy | 65 AD | Nicopolis | I Tim. 1:3; Tit. 3:12 |
| Titus | 65 AD | Nicopolis | Titus 3:12 |

II Tim. ~ 66 AD

Rome (2nd
Imprisonment)

II Tim. 2:9; 4:16

*Considering Paul wrote this epistle (Cf. Hebrews 13:23, 24).

Appendix IV

Edification and Local Preachers

The book of Acts identifies the work of edification of the saints in the earliest days of the church. The idea behind edification is construction. To construct a Christian is to teach one to familiarize, respect, and reverence the sound doctrine of Jesus Christ. After one obeys the gospel there is much to learn. The more one knows of God's divine revelation the greater respect and reverence is exercised. The apostle Peter said, "*Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*" (I Peter 2:5). God has ordained apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to do the work of building or edifying the body of Christ (see II Corinthians 10:8; Ephesians 4:11-12). Seeing that apostles and prophets no longer disseminate divine revelation we are left with pastors, evangelist, and teachers. When pastors, local preachers, and teachers edify the saints today they are establishing and strengthening their brethren in truth just as the early apostles did (see Acts 14:21-22; 18:23).

The Bible speaks of various preachers that remained in various locations for the purpose of edifying the saints. Paul was a preacher (see I Timothy 2:7). Paul, on several occasions, spent time at various churches edifying the saints. The apostle spent three years in Damascus (Galatians 1:16-18), three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31), at least a year and a half at Corinth (Acts 18:11), and one year at Antioch of Syria with Barnabas (Acts 11:25-26) preaching and edifying the saints. Luke spent approximately 7 years in Philippi preaching and edifying the saints (compare Acts 16 with Acts 20:4-6). Timothy spent time in Corinth (I Corinthians 4:17) and Ephesus (I Timothy 1:3ff) edifying the saints.

Edification of the saints was an ongoing work for these earlier located preachers (Acts 9:31). The Lord had ordained the work of edification to these men that they may build up the body of Christ (Acts 13:1). When the body of Christ has been built in strength there are great things that happen. First, the church will naturally **grow** in numbers (see Acts 16:4-5; 9:31). Secondly, the church will experience **peace** (Acts 9:31). Thirdly, the church will walk in the **fear of the Lord** and in the **comfort** of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). Fourthly, the church will experience doctrinal **unity** (Ephesians 4:13). fifthly, the church will **not be so easily led astray** by false doctrines (Ephesians 4:14). Sixthly, it will lead one to obtain the inheritance of **eternal life** (Acts 20:31-32). Seventhly, the individual saint will experience **spiritual growth** (I Corinthians 14:3-5, 12).

While it is true that the fields of men's souls in the world are ripe for the harvest and the Lord needs preachers and teachers to fulfill this duty (see Matt. 9:37-38) it is also true that brethren need edification. The Corinthian church had preachers who had labored full time among them and were receiving wages for such work. Paul said, "*Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel*" (I Corinthians 9:14). Don't "*muzzle the ox when it treads out the corn*" (I Corinthians 9:9). Let us all encourage local preachers who have made it their life's work to not only preach to the lost but to edify the saints of God. Heaven is at stake!

Appendix V

Bible Examples of People Becoming Christians

| Place | Date | Reference | Who | Who and What Preached | Baptism? |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|----------|
| Jerusalem | 33 AD | Acts 2 | Jews | Peter preached Jesus (Acts 2:22ff) | YES |
| Jerusalem | ? | Acts 3:11- 4:4; 5:12-14; 6:1, 7) | Jews | Peter and John preached Jesus (Acts 3:13) | |
| Jerusalem | ? | Acts 4:5ff; 5:30ff; 7:1ff; 23:1ff | Sanhedrin Council | Peter and Paul preached Jesus (Acts 4:10; 5:30;) | |
| Samaria | 34 AD | Acts 8:5-24 | Samaritans | Philip preached Jesus (Acts 8:5) | YES |
| Samaria | 34 AD | Acts 8:10-13 | Simon | Philip preached Jesus (Acts 8:12) | YES |
| Gaza | 34 AD | Acts 8:26-29 | Ethiopian Eunuch | Philip preached Jesus (Acts 8:35) | YES |
| Damascus | 35 AD | Acts 9:6, 18 | Saul of Tarsus | Ananias preached Jesus (Acts 9:17; 22:16) | YES |
| Caesarea | 40 AD | Acts 10:1ff | Cornelius | Peter preached Jesus (Acts 10:36ff) | YES |
| Cyprus | 45 AD | Acts 13:5 | People of Cyprus | Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark preach Jesus | |
| Cyprus | 45 AD | Acts 13:6-12 | Sergius Paulus | Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark preached Jesus (Acts 13:12) | |
| Galatia | 46 - 48 AD | Acts 13:16 - 14:21 | Galatians | Paul and Barnabas preach Jesus (Acts 13:26) | |
| Philippi | 50 AD | Acts 16:14-15 | Lydia | Paul and Silas preached Jesus (Acts 16:14) | YES |
| Philippi | 50 AD | Acts 16:30ff | Philippian Jailer | Paul and Silas preach Jesus (Acts 16:31) | YES |
| Thessalonica | 51 AD | Acts 17:1ff | Thessalonians | Paul and Silas preached Jesus (Acts 17:3) | |
| Beorea | 51 AD | Acts 17:10ff | Beoreans | Paul, Silas, and Timothy preached Jesus (Acts 17:13) | |
| Athens | 51 AD | Acts 17:16ff | Athenians | Paul preached Jesus (Acts 18:5) | |
| Corinth | 51 AD | Acts 18:4ff | Corinthians | Paul preached Jesus (Acts 18:8) | YES |
| Corinth | 51 AD | Acts 18:8 | Crispus | Paul preached Jesus (Acts 18:8) | YES |
| Ephesus | 54 AD | Acts 18:24-28 | Apollos | Pricilla and Aquila preached Jesus (Acts 18:26) | |
| Ephesus | 55 AD | Acts 19:1-5 | 12 Disciples of John | Paul preached Jesus (Acts 19:4ff) | YES |
| Ephesus | 55 AD | Acts 19:8-10 | Ephesians | Paul preached Jesus (Eph. 1:13) | |
| Rome | 60 - 63 AD | Acts 28:23ff | Romans | Paul preached Jesus (Acts 28:23-24) | |

Appendix VI

Faith / Belief in the Book of Acts

Faith can be viewed from a few different angles. If one were to tell you that Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world at an elevation of 29,028 feet above sea level you believe them not because you have actually visited the Himalayas in Asia but because you heard or read the testimony of many witnesses and believed it. Believing that Mount Everest exists is objective faith and believing that it stands as the tallest mountain in the world is subjective faith. We find these types of faith in the Bible. When John writes, "*These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name*" we find Christ as the object of one's faith (Jn. 20:31). When Jude writes, "*contend earnestly for the faith*" he intends for his readers to understand that the subject of one's faith is under consideration (i.e., the gospel message) (see Jude 3).

Some people today believe that you can be saved with simple objective faith. A proof text for such belief is found at Acts 16:30. The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house*" (Acts 16:30). While this verse states that all one must do to be "saved" is believe that Jesus is the Christ it is not all that is said on the subject. Those who hold to such beliefs are confused when they read James writing, "*Ye see that by works a man is justified (saved) , and not only by faith*" (James 2:24).

The Apostle Paul **joins** faith and justification together saying, "*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 5:1 see also Rom. 3:23-28). What we begin to see is that our salvation can in no way be divided between objective or subjective faith. We cannot have one without the other. Simply put, we cannot separate Jesus Christ from his gospel message and expect to be saved. Justification occurs when one not only believes that Jesus is the Christ but also believes and obeys his message.

A simple way of understanding the cohesion that exist between objective and subjective faith is to examine the book of Acts. When Philip preached to the Samaritans, as recorded in Acts 8, we find an example of subjective and objective faith being conjoined. Luke records, "*But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women*" (Acts 8:12). The Samaritans heard the "good tidings" (gospel) and believed the message. The message was about Christ and his Kingdom. They made this faith manifest in that they were baptized. Their baptism was for justification (see Acts 2:38). The fact that they were baptized illustrates that their faith went beyond a simple, "I believe that Jesus is." This objective and subjective faith is why the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-38), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:18; 22:16), Cornelius (Acts 10:48), Lydia (Acts 16:15), the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:33), the Corinthians (Acts 18:8), Crispus the ruler of the Synagogue (Acts 18:8), and the twelve disciples of John (Acts 19:5) were all baptized.

Consider the words of our Lord Jesus Christ on the subject of subjective and objective faith. Jesus said, "*He that believes on the Son hath eternal life (objective faith); but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life (subjective faith), but the wrath of God abides on him*" (Jn. 3:36). The Apostle Paul's first recorded sermon brings objective and subjective faith together in a nice concise manner. Paul states, "*Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man (Jesus Christ) is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believes is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses*" (Acts 13:38-39). Notice the equivalence between the terms "*remission of sins and justification*" and understand that such comes about by one's obedience to the gospel through baptism (see Eph. 1:7 and Acts 2:38). One is not moved to justification without hearing and believing in subjective faith (i.e., the gospel). If subjective faith is not important in man's justification then why did the Holy Spirit command Christians to live (Rom. 1:17), walk by (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 4:12; Gal. 3:11; Eph. 4:1ff), be grounded in (Col. 1:23), stand fast in (I Cor. 16:13), and to be sound in faith (Titus 1:13)? Again, why is it so dangerous to "err" from subjective faith if objective faith is all one needs to be justified (I Tim. 6:10, 20-21)?

Understanding the inseparable connection between objective and subjective faith will clear up much confusion when reading passages in the Bible about people believing. When the Bible tells us that Paul and Barnabas preached to the Galatians in Iconium and that they "*believed*" (Acts 14:1) we understand that they had gained both an objective and subjective faith in Jesus and his gospel message. Those that did not "*believe*" were said to be "*disobedient*" (Acts 14:2). The Galatians were thereby justified when they obeyed the

gospel. Timothy is introduced to us as one who simply "believed" yet we know that Timothy's faith was made manifest through

obedience to subjective faith (the gospel - see Acts 16:1-2). When I read of people "believing" in the book of Acts I understand that this faith was not a simple, "I believe that Jesus is," but also an "I will obey all that Jesus teaches through his gospel message" (see Acts 16:31; 17:12, 32-34 etc.).

Hebrews chapter 11 is a great commentary on the subject of faith and its connection to man's obedience and justification. The author of Hebrews defines faith for us by saying, "*Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen*" (Heb. 11:1). Understanding the context that this passage is written in will help us better understand faith. Hebrews chapter 10 reveals the Lord's discontentment with those who profess faith in Him yet fall away when troubles come. Conversely, the Lord is pleased and expresses His confidence in those who maintain their faith through trying times. With the idea of faith introduced, the author of Hebrews takes much space to identify precisely what faith is. Faith is identified by two terms; i.e., "*assurance of things hoped for and a conviction of things not seen.*" To be "*assured*" is to come to a realization that something is (see Moulton's Greek English word study on page 419). To have "*conviction*" in something is to see the evidence of that which is under consideration (see Lidell and Scott's Greek English Lexicon page 249 {LS}). Faith is the realization that something is based upon the evidences supplied. I believe that Mount Everest exists and I believe that it is the tallest mountain in the world based upon evidences.

God has supplied divine evidence for man to believe that He is. Man is completely without excuse when it comes to believing or not believing because the Lord reveals Himself through **creation** (that which all men see) (Gen. 1-2; Ps. 19:1; 33:6-9; Rom. 1:18-23; Heb. 11:3). God has also given divine **revelation** to uncover all things regarding who He is and what He has to offer man (see Jn. 4:39-42; 20:30-31; Rom. 10:17). One gains confidence in revelation as it is studied and found to be true through **fulfilled prophecies** (see Isa. 46:9-10). Furthermore man's **natural understanding of moral issues** is confirmed by revelation (see Rom. 1:19-20; 26; 2:14, 27; I Cor. 11:14). The result of creation, revelation, fulfilled prophecy, and one's natural understanding of moral issues is enough evidence to convince one that God is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek after him (Heb. 11:6).

Let us conclude by considering the faith of our forefathers as revealed in God's word. The author of Hebrews writes, "*For therein the elders had witness borne to them*" (Heb. 11:2). The idea of having "*witness borne to them*" (*hemarturethesan*) means "to be a witness, to bear witness, give evidence, bear testimony, ... testify that a thing is" (LS 488). The construction of this verse lends evidence to the fact that the mentioned elders were not elders in the church but elder forefathers in the faith that are mentioned in the rest of this chapter. The life of these men and women such as Abraham, Sarah, etc. evidence or 'testify' that their faith was real by their obedient acts. Hebrews 11 gives a multitude of examples of men and women who by their obedience to God's word evidenced their faith in His promises. Do you believe that Jesus is? If you say yes that implies, Biblically speaking, that you have not only an objective faith but a subjective faith that is made evident by your obedience to God's divine revelation. Paul said that this is the whole reason men preach the gospel (see Rom. 1:5). Jesus said that those who do not have God's word abiding in them truly do not believe (Jn. 5:38).

Appendix VII

Political Structure of Roman Empire during the days of Acts of the Apostles in Judea

Roman Emperor

Gaius Octavious **Augustus**
(27 BC - 14 AD)

Tiberius Julius Caesar
Augustus (AD 14 – AD 37)

Gaius Caesar Germanicus
(**Caligula**) (AD 37-41)

Claudius (Tiberius Claudius
Drusus Nero Germanicus)
(AD 41 – AD 54)

Nero (Nero Claudius Caesar)
(AD 54 – AD 68)

PALESTINIAN KING

37 BC – 4 BC Herod The Great: Herod has three sons who rule the region of Palestine from 4 BC – AD 39.

Archaelus reigned in Samaria, Judea and Idumea (4 BC - 6 AD)
Antipas reigned in Galilee and Perea (6 - 39 AD)
Philip reigned in Iturea, Trachonitis, Gaulanitis, Auranitis and Batanea (4 BC - 34 AD)

Herod Agrippa I (10 BC - 44 AD) reigned from 37 AD to AD 44 in the Northern section of Palestine. From 39 AD to AD 44 he gained Galilee and Perea. He was named king of the entire region of Palestine in **41 AD** and remained to **AD 44**. Herod is found at Acts 12:1-5, 11, 19-23).

Herod Agrippa's death is recorded in Acts 12:1ff. **Roman appointed governors** ruled all of Palestine from 44 AD to 53 AD.

Herod Julius Marcus Agrippa II began his reign of North and Northeast Palestine in **AD 53** reigning to **AD 100** (Acts 25:13-26:32).

Roman Procurator

Pontius Pilate (AD 26- AD 36)

Marcellus (begins AD 36 or 37)

No apparent procurator between **Marcellus** and **Fadus**.

Josephus writes: "Claudius made the country a Roman province, and sent **Cuspius Fadus** to be its procurator" (*War* 2.11.6). Fadus dates **AD 44 – AD 48**.

Tiberius Julius Alexander
(r. AD 46 to AD 48)

Publius Ventidius Cumanus
(AD 48 to AD 52)

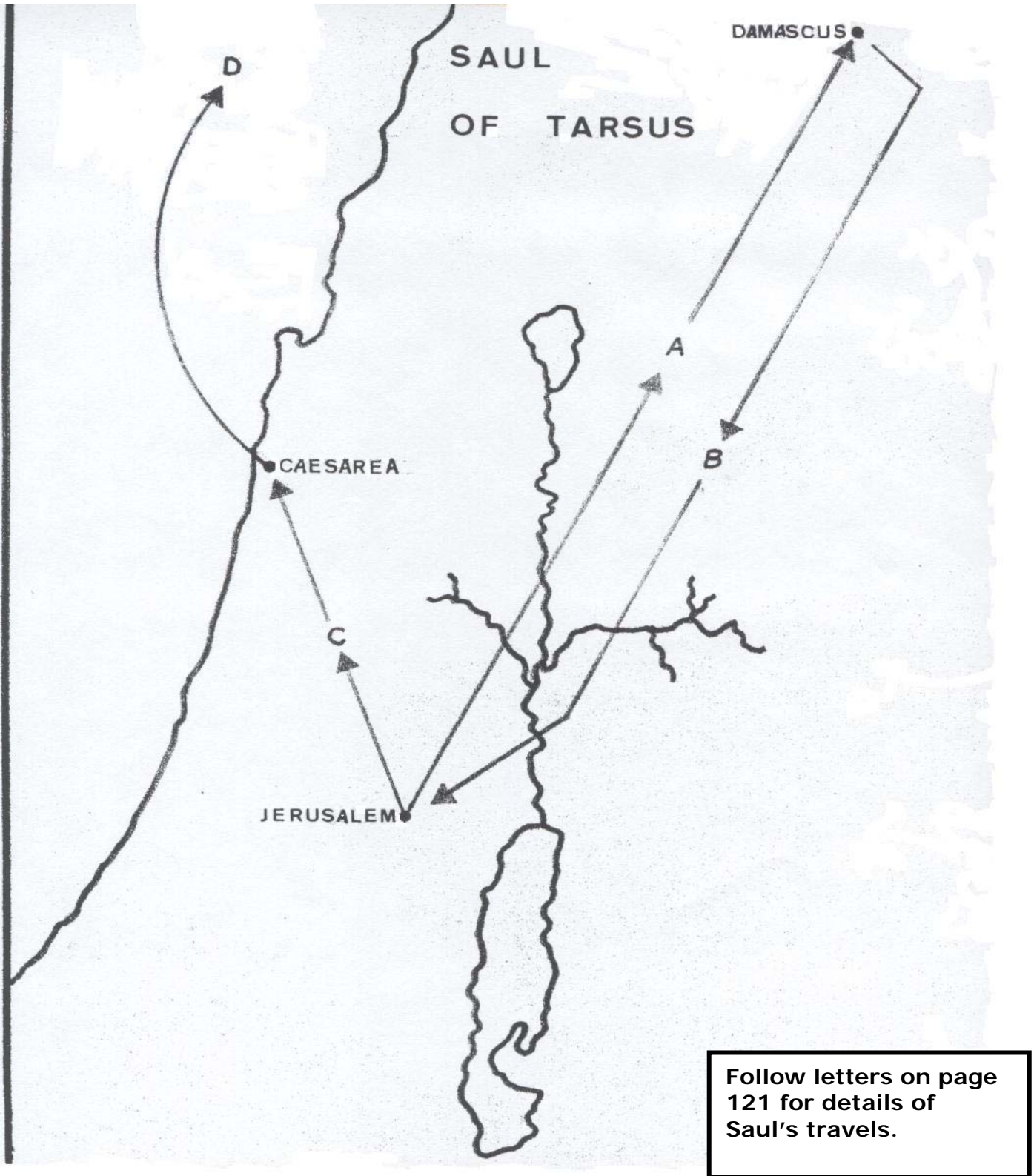
Marcus Antonius Felix (AD 52 to AD 60)

Porcius Festus (AD 60 to AD 62)

Luceius Albinus (AD 62 to 64)

Appendix VIII: Map Studies in Acts

Study A: The Travels of Saul of Tarsus

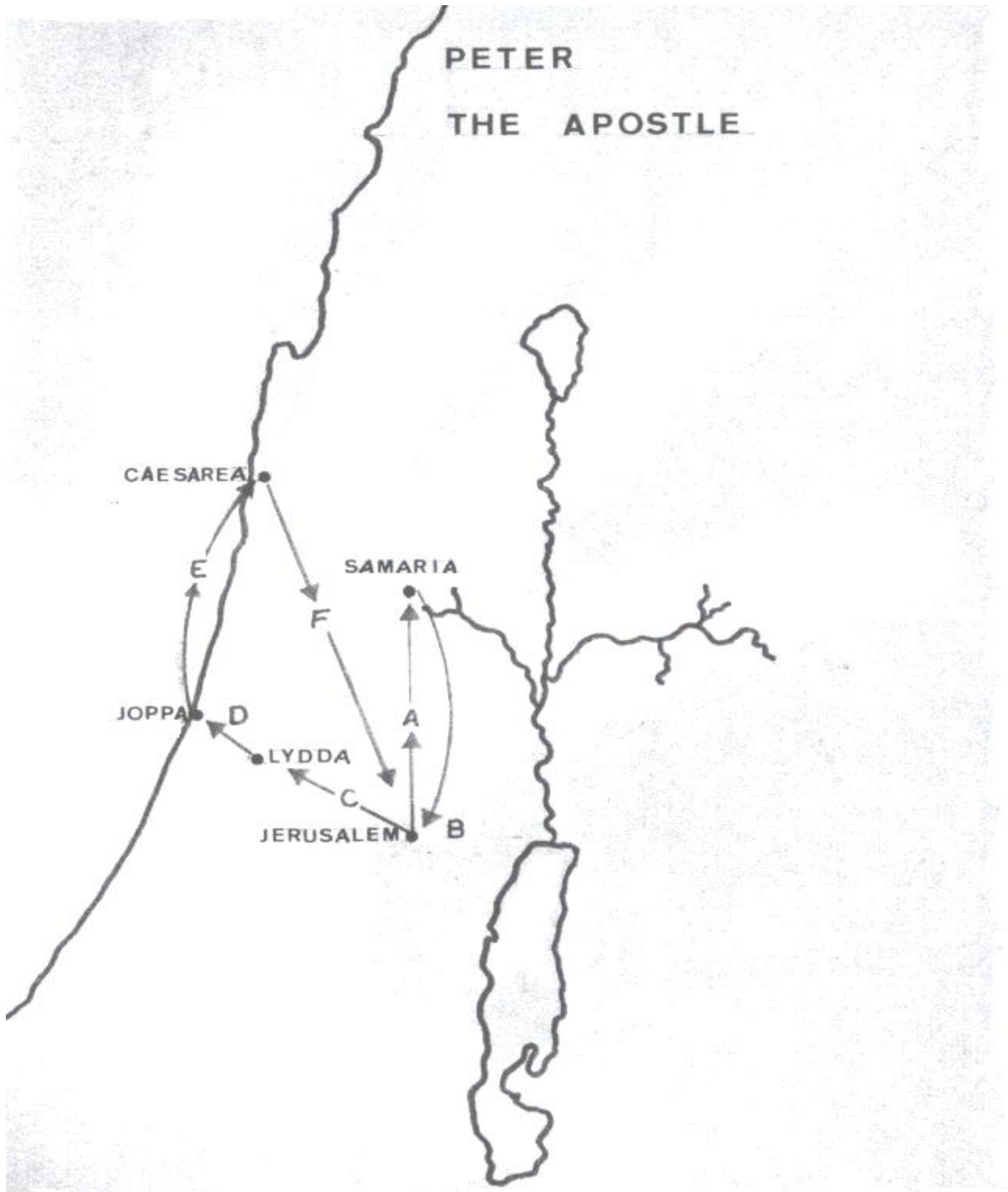


Details of Saul's Travels

We are first introduced to Saul in Acts 7:58. Saul was consenting to the stoning and death of Stephen in the city of **Jerusalem**.

- A.** Saul travels from Jerusalem to **Damascus** to persecute Christians at the permission of the high priest (9:1). Jesus appears to Saul while traveling to Damascus (Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-10; 26:12-18). Saul goes into Damascus at the direction of Jesus and there Ananias baptized Saul (Acts 9:18, 22:16). Saul immediately preaches Jesus in Damascus (Acts 9:20). Saul travels into the region of **Arabia** to preach and then returns to **Damascus** where he spent three years preaching Jesus (Gal. 1:17-18).
- B.** Threats on Saul's life caused him to leave Damascus (Acts 9:23-25). Saul travels to **Jerusalem** where he stayed with the apostle Peter for 15 days (Gal. 1:18-19). During this time, Saul preached Jesus (Acts 9:27). Again, Grecian Jews sought to kill Saul in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29).
- C.** Saul escapes, by the help of brethren, to **Caesarea** (9:30).
- D.** From Caesarea Saul travels to **Tarsus** (Acts 9:30). Paul reveals in his Galatian epistle that while in Tarsus, he preached to the region of "**Syria and Cilicia**" (Gal. 1:21). Evidently, Saul's preaching was successful (Cf. Acts 15:23, 41). Barnabas travels to Tarsus, finds Saul, and brings him back to **Antioch** (Acts 11:24-25). The brethren in Judea were to face famine according to Agabus the prophet (Acts 11:27). Barnabas and Saul travel to the **churches of Judea** distributing the funds to each church's elders (Acts 11:30). Barnabas and Saul return to **Antioch** after delivering the contribution (Acts 12:25).

Study B: Travels of the Apostle Peter



Details of Peter's Travels

- A. Peter preaches first gospel sermon with conditions for remission of sins in **Jerusalem** on Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter travels with John to **Samaria** after hearing that the Samaritans had received the gospel (Acts 8:14).
- B. Peter and John return to **Jerusalem** (Acts 8:25).
- C. Peter travels to **Lydda** and heals a lame man named Aeneas (Acts 9:32-34) and converted many (9:35).
- D. Peter travels to **Joppa** and raises Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead (Acts 9:36ff). Many obey the gospel as a result of hearing of Tabitha's miraculous resurrection (Acts 9:42).
- E. Peter travels from Joppa to **Caesarea** at the instructions of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:1ff). Though Philip was in Caesarea, the Holy Spirit called for Peter to preach to the household of Cornelius because he was a Gentile. Peter had opened the door of salvation to the Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2) and now he opens the same door to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11). The words of Jesus are thus fulfilled regarding giving Peter the keys to the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19).
- F. Peter returns to **Jerusalem** and is imprisoned after the death of James (Acts 12). Herod Agrippa I wanted to kill Peter; however, Peter is miraculously delivered by an angel of God (Acts 12:7).

Study C: Travels of Philip the Evangelist



Details of Philips Travels

- A. Travels from **Jerusalem** "down" to **Samaria** (Acts 8:5).
 - 1. Converts Samaritans and Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:4-13).
 - 2. Called by the Holy Spirit to leave Samaria (Acts 8:26).

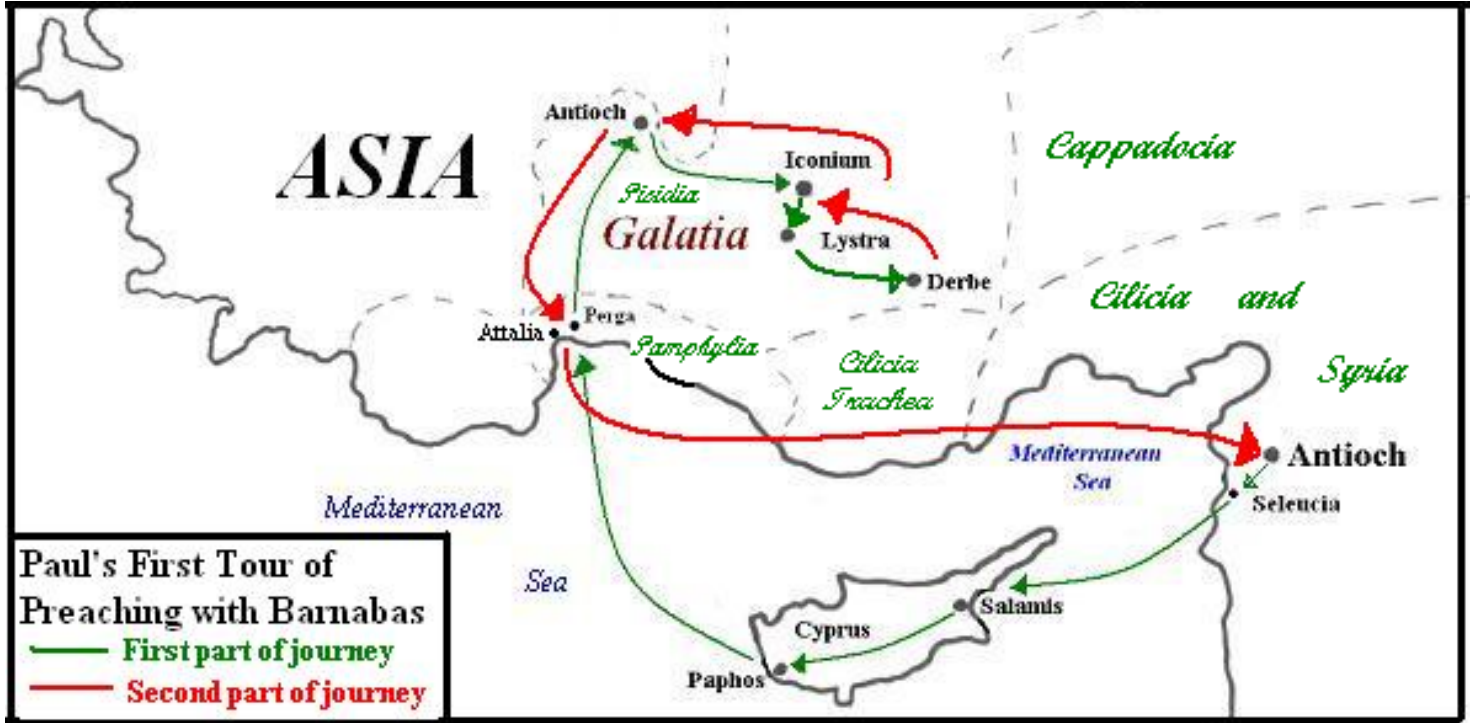
- B. Travels from Samaria to **Gaza** (Acts 8:26b)
 - 1. Preached to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:27-39).
 - 2. Eunuch was baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 8:38).

- C. Travels from Gaza to **Azotus (Ashdod)** (Acts 8:40).

- D. From Ashdod, Philip travels northward to **Caesarea** (Acts 8:40b) preaching in all the cities in between (Lydda and Joppa). Apparently a church is established in these cities due to Peter finding disciples there (Acts 9:32, 38).

- E. **Caesarea** appears to be the dwelling place for Philip (Acts 21:8).

Study D: Paul's First Tour of Preaching



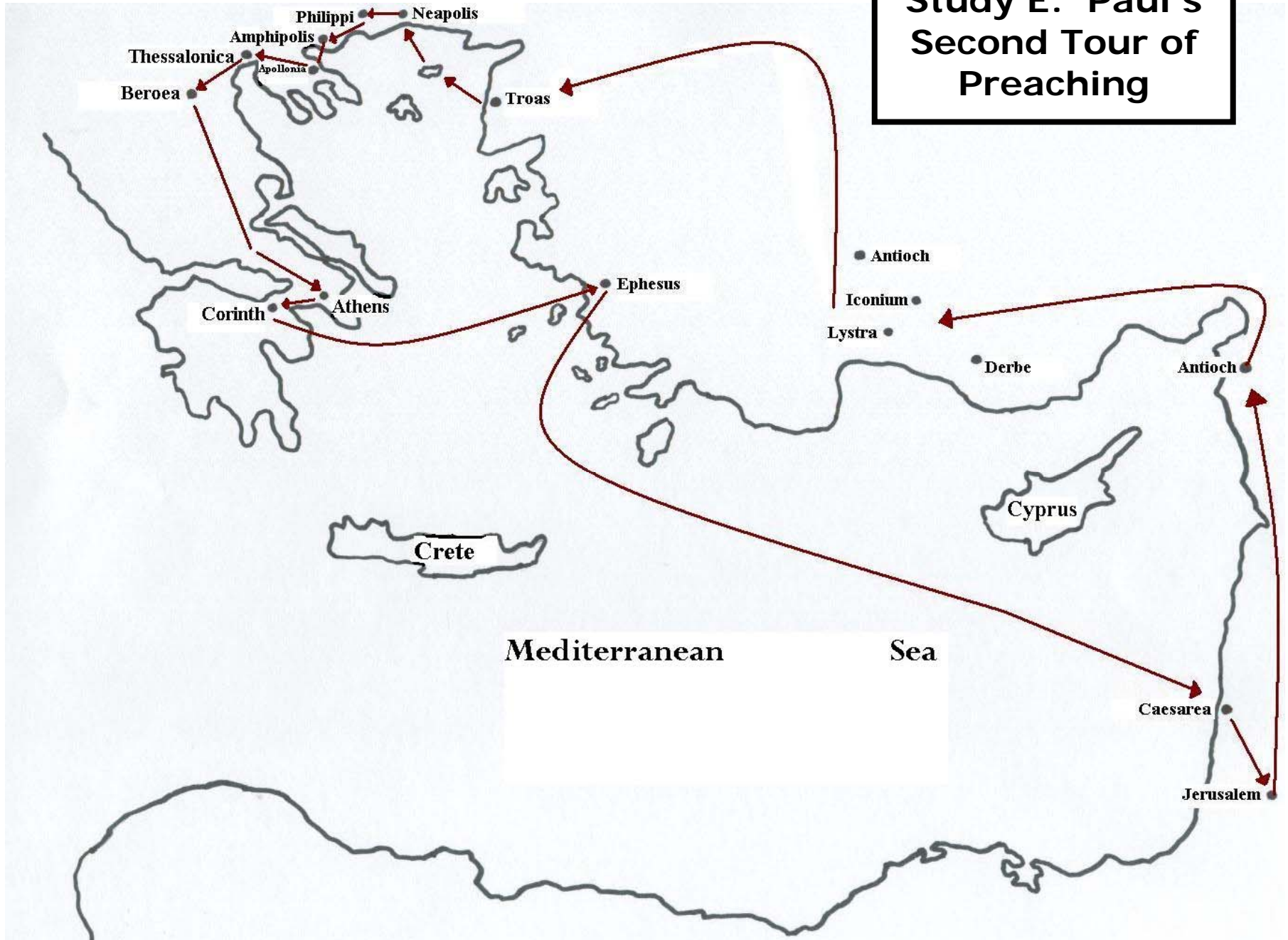
Details of the first tour of Preaching: Acts 13:4 – 14:28

Dates: AD 45 to AD 48

- Beginning at **Antioch** of Syria, Paul, Barnabas and John Mark travel approximately 20 miles westward to **Seleucia** (13:4).
- Setting sail through the Mediterranean Sea, the three travel to the island of **Cyprus** (13:4b).
- Landing at **Salamis**, a coastal city on Cyprus, "*they proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews*" (13:5).
- Paul, Barnabas and John Mark traverse westward to the island's capital city **Paphos** (13:6) after preaching in Salamis.
 - Sergius Paulus, the Roman Procurator of Cyprus, made his home in **Paphos**.
 - A sorcerer named Bar-Jesus was in good standing with Sergius due to his deceptive practices in the name of God.
 - Paul denounces the work of the Sorcerer and strikes him blind and Sergius Paulus is converted (13:9-12).
- Setting sail once more, Paul and his companions travel Northward through the Mediterranean Sea from **Paphos** landing at **Perga** in the region of **Pamphylia** (13:13).
 - John Mark departs from Paul and Barnabas at **Perga**. It is possible that John Mark did not want to face the dangers that lie ahead of them in the **Taurus Mountains**.
 - Luke makes no mention of Paul and Barnabas preaching in **Perga** even though it is the capital city of **Pamphylia**.

- F. Traveling Northward from Perga, Paul and Barnabas cross the Taurus Mountains with no apparent difficulties and come to **Antioch of Pisidia**.
1. Paul and Barnabas attend the Sabbath day synagogue service.
 2. The rulers of the synagogue allowed Paul to address the assembly.
 3. Paul preaches his first recorded gospel sermon (13:17-40).
- G. After the above sermon, both Jew and Gentile alike desired to hear more the next Sabbath (13:42).
- H. The next Sabbath produced enormous crowds come to hear Paul and Barnabas preach. When the Jews saw this they were jealous. They stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and cast them out of their borders. A church was established in **Antioch!**
- I. Leaving Antioch of **Pisidia**, Paul and Barnabas travel east to **Iconium**. A church is established in Iconium and again a persecution against Paul and Barnabas arises.
- J. Paul and Barnabas leave Iconium and travel to **Lystra**. Paul heals a man lame from birth (14:8). The town's people thought that Paul and Barnabas were mythological gods calling them Jupiter (Zeus) and Mercury (Hermes). They tried to make sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas; however, the two would not allow it.
- K. The persecuting Jews came from Antioch and **Iconium** and stirred the people of **Lystra** up against Paul and Barnabas. Paul is stoned to the point of the people believing him to be dead (14:19).
- L. Paul recovers from the stoning and travels further east to **Derbe** (14:20). A church is quickly established (14:21).
- M. From **Derbe**, Paul and Barnabas travel back through the cities of **Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia** for two purposes:
1. To confirm the disciples and exhort them to continue in the faith (14:22).
 2. To appoint elders in every church (14:23).
- N. Traveling south from Antioch of **Pisidia** they entered **Pamphylia** and preached in **Perga** (14:24).
- O. Leaving **Perga**, Paul and Barnabas travel to **Attalia**. Setting sail from **Attalia** the two came back to their starting point, **Antioch of Syria**.
- P. At Antioch, "*they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles*" (14:27).

Study E: Paul's Second Tour of Preaching



The Second tour of Preaching

Acts 15:36 – 18:23

Dates: AD 50 – 54

- A. As Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch for a little over a year after the Jerusalem conference, Paul decides to travel back to the churches of southern Galatia to “*see how they faired*” (15:36).
- B. Paul and Barnabas participate in “*sharp contention*” to the point of going their separate ways: Paul and Silas to **Cilicia and Syria** and Barnabas with John Mark to Cyprus (15:36-40).
- C. Paul and Silas travel through the region of **Cilicia** and Syria “*confirming the churches*” (15:41).
- D. Paul and Silas travel further west to **Galatia**. The first Galatian City visited was **Derbe**. Secondly, they come to **Lystra**. Paul and Silas meet Timothy in **Lystra**, circumcise him and take him along as a traveling companion.
- E. Traveling North-westward the three visit **Iconium** and **Antioch of Pisidia** (16:1ff) delivering the “*decrees*” (dogma) produced in Acts 15:23ff (Cf. 16:4).
- F. The Holy Spirit forbids Paul, Silas and Timothy from going into **Asia** (16:6). Apparently, they travel on the border of **Galatia and Phrygia Northward to Bithynia** (16:7).
- G. Again, the “*Spirit of Jesus*” forbid them to travel into **Bithynia** (16:7b). The three therefore travel due west through **Mysia** and land at the coastal town of **Troas** (16:8).
- H. Immediately after the vision, Paul and his companions cross the **Aegean Sea** in rout to **Macedonia** (16:10).
 - 1. This is our introduction to Luke.
 - 2. Luke modestly introduces himself into the text by the first person plural pronoun “*we*” (16:10).
- I. Nothing is said about preaching in **Troas**; however, it appears that a church was established there (Cf. II Cor. 2:12).
- J. Crossing the **Aegean Sea** the four arrive at **Samothrace**, a small island in rout to **Neapolis**.
- K. Traveling northwest from **Samothrace**, Paul and his companions land at a seaport of Macedonia known as **Neapolis**.
- L. Leaving **Neapolis**, they travel twelve miles westward to **Philippi**.
- M. Apparently there was no synagogue in Philippi. Paul and his companions asked regarding the whereabouts of a Jewish place of worship. The information led them to a river outside of town where women met to pray (16:13).
- N. Lydia’s conversion (16:14-15).
- O. While in **Philippi**, Paul is annoyed with a girl who has an evil spirit within her. The girl follows the four preachers day by day proclaiming that they had words of salvation.
- P. Paul commands the evil spirit to come out of the girl and it does so immediately.
- Q. The girls’ masters are incensed over the matter because they used the demon’s powers to make money.
- R. Paul and Silas are captured and imprisoned and beaten with rods for their part in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such preaching was considered unlawful to the Romans (16:21).
- S. While in prison, Paul and Silas sing praises to God (16:25).

- T. A miraculous earthquake occurs loosening the prisoner's chains.
- U. The jailer is prepared to kill himself when Paul stops him claiming that all are accounted for.
- V. Paul and Silas take the opportunity to preach the gospel to the jailer and he is converted along with his house (16:30ff).
- W. Luke and Timothy stay behind in Philippi while Paul and Silas travel through **Amphipolis** and **Apollonia** and come to **Thessalonica** (Acts 17:1).
- X. Paul and Silas preach Jesus and convert "*some*" of the Thessalonians (17:4).
- Y. The unbelieving Jews stir up a riot against Paul and Silas causing them to flee to **Beroea** but not before a faithful church is established in **Thessalonica**.
- Z. The Bereans were "*noble minded*" and "*searched the scriptures*" to see whether the things Paul said were true (17:11).
- AA. When the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica heard that Paul and Silas were preaching in Beroea, they travel there and cause another riot. The Berean brethren take Paul and escort him southward as far as **Athens**. Silas remains behind.
- BB. Paul sent word to Silas and Timothy to join him in **Athens**. Apparently, Silas and Timothy come immediately to **Athens** and Timothy sent directly back to Thessalonica. Since Paul went into **Corinth** alone it is apparent as well that Silas was sent back either to **Thessalonica or Beroea** (Cf. I Thess. 3:1).
- CC. Paul preaches to the Athenians alone with little success (Cf. 17:33-34).
- DD. From **Athens**, Paul travels to the city of **Corinth** (18:1).
- EE. Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla. This man and wife were Jews from Italy who shared a common faith and trade with the apostle Paul, as they were tent makers.
- FF. Silas and Timothy (18:5) join Paul in **Corinth**. Apparently the two have brought monetary aid to Paul that enables him to spend all his time preaching the gospel (Cf. 18:5 and II Cor. 11:9).
- GG. The Jews reject the word of God but Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed and was baptized (18:8).
- HH. An angry Moab unsuccessfully convicts Paul before Gallio the Roman procurator (18:12ff).
- II. Paul leaves **Corinth** with Priscilla and Aquila. They travel across the **Aegean Sea** and land at **Ephesus** (18:18-21).
- JJ. Paul did not remain in **Ephesus** long at all. He left the brethren assuring them that if it be God's will, he would return to them shortly (18:21).
- KK. Traveling alone, Paul leaves **Ephesus** and comes to **Caesarea of Judea** by way of the **Mediterranean Sea** (18:22).
- LL. Leaving **Caesarea**, he travels up to **Jerusalem** and then down to **Antioch of Syria** (18:22).
- MM. The entire second tour took approximately 3 ½ to 4 years.

Acts 18:23 - 21:16

Galatia

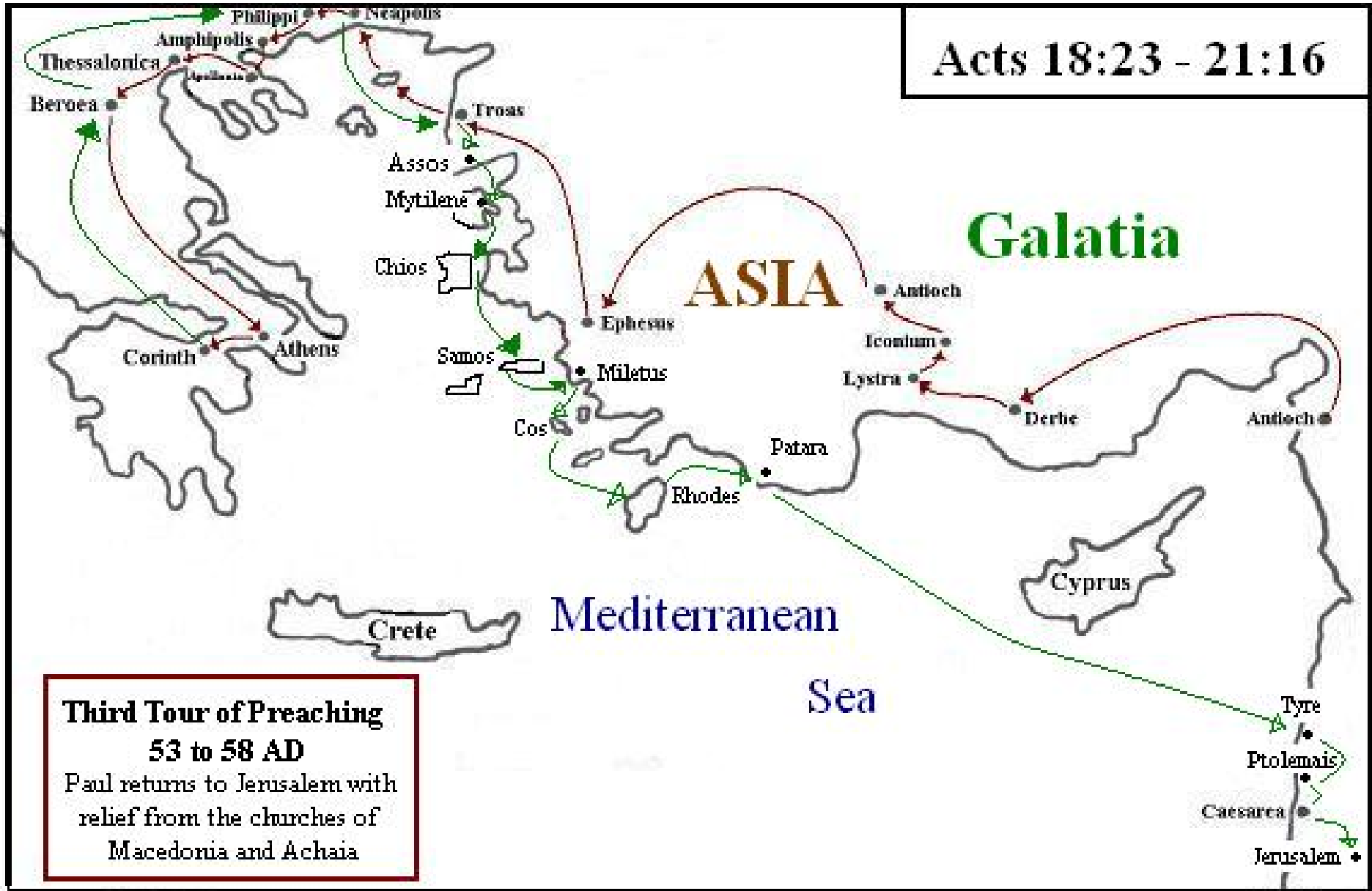
ASIA

Mediterranean

Sea

Third Tour of Preaching
53 to 58 AD

Paul returns to Jerusalem with relief from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia



The Third tour of Preaching

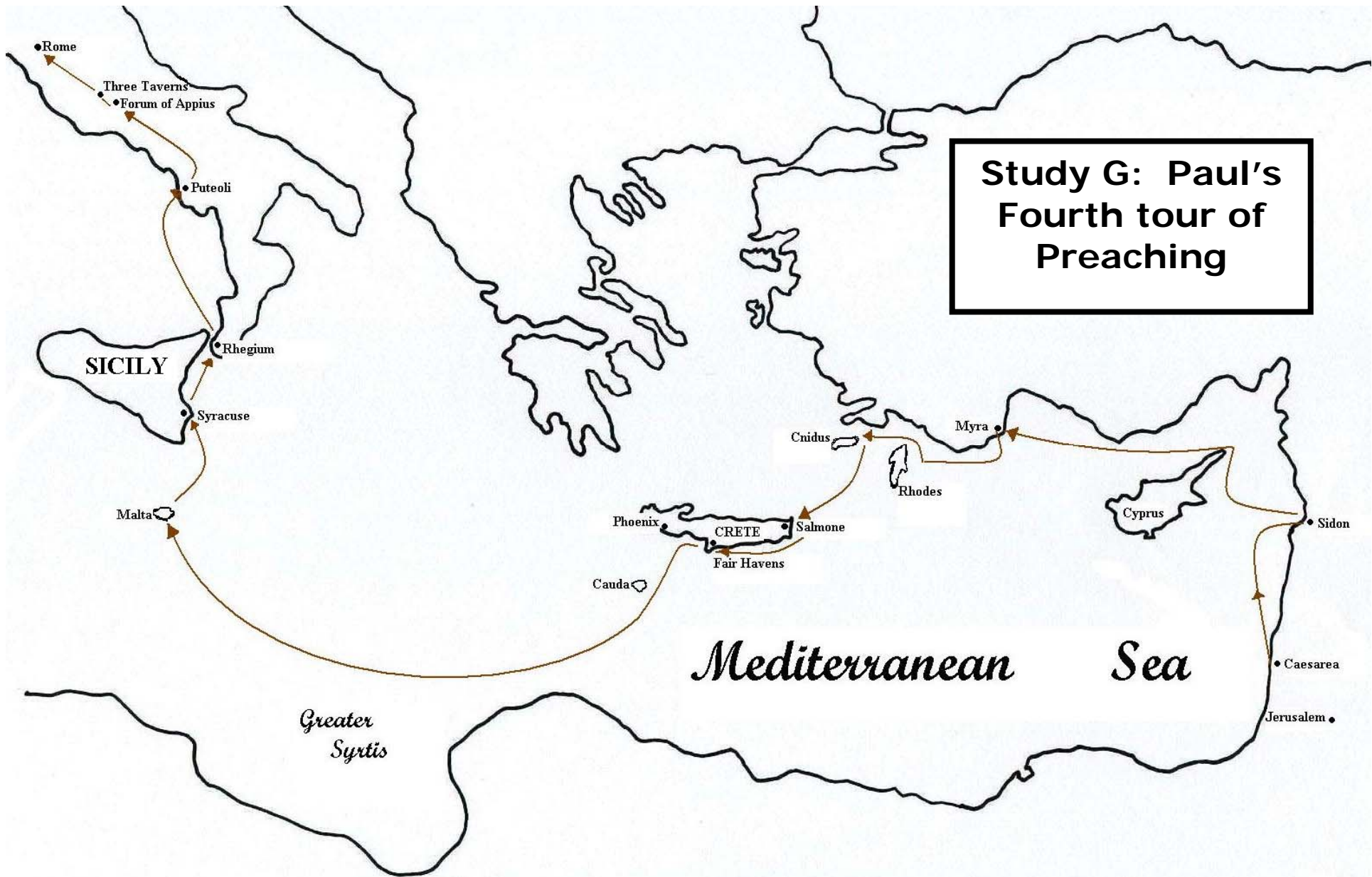
Acts 18:23 – 21:17

Dates: AD 55 – AD 60

- A. Paul begins at **Antioch of Syria** and travels through the region of **Galatia** and **Phrygia** establishing the saints (18:23).
- B. **Ephesus** was Paul's next destination. Paul preached the gospel to 12 disciples of John the Baptist upon arrival in Ephesus (19:1-5).
- C. Paul spends three months reasoning in the Ephesian synagogue and making disciples (19:8).
- D. Two years after this were spent "*reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus*" (19:9-10).
- E. Paul performs many faith producing miracles in **Ephesus** which caused not only unbelievers to repent but believers as well (19:11ff). Some of the Ephesian Christians had involved themselves in the arts of magic yet now they repent.
- F. While preaching in **Ephesus**, Paul is confronted by Demetrius the silversmith. Demetrius made a living by fashioning models of the great temple of Diana. Paul preached against idolatry with great success in Ephesus and was therefore hurting the silversmith's business. A mob is formed against Paul yet no harm comes (19:23-41).
- G. Paul leaves **Ephesus** around the year 57 AD. He was determined to get to the Gentile churches in **Macedonia and Achaia** in order to collect the funds for the needy saints in Jerusalem (Cf. Rom. 15:22-28).
- H. Paul travels north to **Troas** from **Ephesus** and there awaits the arrival of Titus (II Cor. 2:12-13).
- I. Titus is delayed, Paul travels onward to **Philippi** and there most likely finds Titus. It is most probable that Paul wrote the second epistle to the Corinthians here (AD 58) (II Cor. 7:5-8).
- J. Again, it is most probable that Paul visited the gentile churches that he had previously established on his second tour as he headed to **Corinth**. Along the way, he was collecting the funds for the needy saints in Jerusalem (Cf. I Cor. 16:1-2).
- K. Paul arrives at **Corinth**, remains for three months and pins the letter to the Romans (20:3; Rom. 15:25; 16:1).
- L. Due to a plot made against his life, Paul decided not to return to Jerusalem immediately (20:3b). Paul travels back through Macedonia to **Philippi** (20:6).
- M. Paul meets Luke in Philippi and then sails to **Troas** (20:6).
- N. The nine men partake of the Lord's supper with the saints in **Troas** and then leave for **Assos**. Paul travels by land and the eight others by sea (20:13).
- O. Paul meets his eight traveling companions in **Assos** and together they board a ship and head for **Mitylene**, the capital city of **Lesbos**.
- P. After spending the night at **Mitylene**, the men travel further southward to **Chios**. Again, they spend the night here and travel the next day to **Samos**. After spending the night in **Samos**, the men travel further southward to **Miletus**, a port city of **Asia**.
- Q. Paul calls for the Ephesian elders here and discourses with them encouraging and warning them (20:18-35).
- R. The next stop was **Cos** where they spent the night (21:1).
- S. From **Cos**, Paul and his companions travel southeasterly to the island of **Rhodes** and from there to **Patara** (21:1).
- T. Boarding a larger sea vessel for open sea travel, the men travel to **Phoenicia** passing the island of **Cyprus** to the south (21:3) and landing at **Tyre**. At **Tyre**, Paul meets with some disciples there and lodges with them.

- U. The next day the men traveled southward to **Ptolemais** and then to **Caesarea** where they lodged with Philip the Evangelist (21:8). The time Paul stayed here is unknown. Luke refers to it as "*these days*" (20:15).
- V. Leaving **Caesarea**, Paul and his companions come to **Jerusalem**. Paul is imprisoned and the third tour of preaching comes to an end.

**Study G: Paul's
Fourth tour of
Preaching**



The Fourth Tour of preaching Acts 27:1 – 28:31

Dates: AD 60 – AD 63

- A. Paul, Luke and Aristarchus leave **Caesarea** with other prisoners and Roman soldiers bound for **Italy**.
- B. The crew lands at **Sidon**, which is about 67 miles to the north of **Caesarea**.
- C. From **Sidon**, the crew heads North around the East Side of the island of **Cyprus** then head due west along the Asian coast.
- D. The winds were out of the west, which made the travel difficult. The ship ports at **Myra**, a port city of **Lysia**.
- E. The crew boards another ship at **Myra**. The ship is an Alexandrian ship loaded with wheat. They leave **Myra** and travel westward to a small island called **Cnidus**.
- F. The gale force winds were too much for further westward travel. The ship turns due south and travels under the lee of **Crete** for relief of the wind.
- G. They come to **Fair Havens** and port. **Fair Havens**, a southern port city of **Crete**, was not "*commodious*" to stay for the winter (27:12).
- H. Julius, the Roman centurion in charge of the prisoners, agrees with the captain of the ship to sail thirty miles further west and port in **Phoenix**. Paul warns the crew of such a trip; however, the centurion and captain ignore him (27:10).
- I. Soon after pulling up the anchors and sailing westward along the coast of **Crete**, the Euraquilo winds pressed the vessel out to sea (27:15).
- J. The sailors attempt to sail under the lee of another small island named **Cauda** (27:16); however, they are pushed further out to sea.
- K. The crew threw furniture and freight (wheat) overboard as they "*labored exceedingly with the storm*" (27:18).
- L. When all hope of survival was gone, Paul stands before the crew and encourages them telling them of a visit from an angel of God. The angel assured Paul that he must make it to Rome and that all the lives of the passengers would be spared.
- M. The men are encouraged and they eat a meal together to gain their strength. Taking soundings for water depth, the sailors found shallower and shallower water that indicated that they were near a landmass.
- N. Upon daybreak, no one could recognize the land yet all were encouraged. The sailors drove the ship into a sandbank in an attempt to salvage the crew. When the ship began to break up, the crew swam and floated on planks to the beach of a small island called **Malta** (Melita). The crew remained on the island of **Malta** for three months (28:11).
- O. Sailing Northward on another Alexandrian ship, the crew lands at **Syracuse** and remains three days (28:12).
- P. Leaving Syracuse, the crew travels further northward and lands at **Rhegium** staying one day (28:13).
- Q. A favorable south wind blows and enables the crew to reach **Puteoli** the next day (28:13). There were brethren at **Puteoli** and the crew remained there seven days (28:14).
- R. From **Puteoli**, the crew travels northward to "**the Market of Appius**" and "**The Three Taverns**" (28:15). Brethren from **Rome** heard of their travels and came out to meet them in these cities.
- S. Acts 28:16 states that the crew arrived safely in **Rome**. The year was 60 - 61 AD. Paul remains a prisoner here for two years and the book of Acts ends.

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