

9-26-24 THURSDAY's 6:30 PM BIBLE NOTES – ACTS 1-2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (INTRODUCTION)

Luke wrote the book of Acts. He was the only New Testament writer who was not of "the circumcision"; that is, not of Israel. See Col. 4:11-14. He had written the Gospel of Christ as "the Son of Man," to a man, Theophilus, for all men. (Luke 1:3) How fitting that he should now write the continuation of salvation for Jews and Gentiles which the Book of Acts records. Though this book is called The Acts of the Apostles, and rightly so, it is the continuation of the deeds and teachings of Christ. The same Holy Spirit, who filled and led Jesus, also filled and led the apostles. Through His mighty power, Christ went on working and teaching by the ministering of the apostles. You will also notice that this book has no formal ending; for the works and words of Jesus Christ can never be fully written with pen and ink. (Compare John 21:25) Rather, they are written "in tables that are hearts of flesh." II Cor. 3:3, Neither does Jesus lack men to carry on His work today.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Added on Thursday 9-19-24

The Book of Acts forms an important bridgework between the four Gospel Records and the Epistles. Gospel records: Matthew pictures Christ as the King or the Lion; Mark pictures Christ as the Servant or the Ox; Luke pictures Christ as the Son of Man; and John pictures Christ as the Eagle or the Heavenly One.

It is not only historical, but also emphatically prophetic, typical, and dispensational. We must look for all these features in the book in order to obtain the greatest profit from our study. Let us always bear in mind when reading any book of the Bible, that we are reading the mind of God. Hence, this is no ordinary account. We are entering into the supernatural. We are amazed at the depth and breadth of truth contained in the Book of Acts.

TWO GRAND DIVISIONS

Our textbook falls naturally into two very important parts, or divisions. The first twelve chapters comprise the first division, and the remaining sixteen chapters the second division. Each division clusters around one particular character: the first, Peter, the second, around Paul. The first section pertains to the Kingdom of God, of which Peter was the chief apostle. The second section pertains to the Church, or Body of Christ, of which Paul was the chief apostle. We cannot over-estimate the value of seeing this distinction and of holding to it, if we would understand this book.

AN IMPORTANT VACANCY FILLED Added Thursday 9-19-24

There 12 disciples but one Judas hung himself after He had sold His Lord for 30 pieces of silver. Matthew 27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: 2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. 3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.

And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Twelve is always the Divine number of Kingdom fulness. Four, the divisible number of humanity, multiplied by three, the indivisible number of Deity, equals 12, the comprehensive number of Divine dominion on earth and of new creation completeness. Study the holy city in See separate notes on Revelation 21 attached.

The Holy Spirit would not come until that vacancy, left by Judas Iscariot, was filled. Wonderful! God had a man in training for that place during those three years. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us (1:21).

1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

THE FIRST DIVISION, chapters 1 to 12, summarizes God's dealings with Israel during this age; and ends with the typical overthrow of anti-Christ (Herod). This book is not simply biography and history, but it is also rich prophecy. The first twelve chapters cover a period of about twelve years. This number is the full Kingdom number, and is very significant here. While God was preparing to suspend His dealings with His ancient people Israel, He was also preparing to introduce a new order of things -- the Church.

Verses 3 and 6 indicate the theme of the first 12 chapters - the Kingdom. Acts 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

V6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel.

There is a Transition from Israel to the Church.

Remember that these first chapters are primarily occupied with Kingdom matters. Church affairs really begin with Chapter 13.

THE SECOND DIVISION, chapters 13 to 28, summarizes the ministry of the Apostle Paul and his co-laborers among the Gentiles, planting churches to which he afterward wrote letters. We consider the Acts a pattern book. Here we learn what to do and how to do it. If we keep to the simplicity of our operations outlined in this wonderful sample history, we will be spared unspeakable failures and unnecessary heartaches.

How many divisions are there to this book?

There are two divisions. First division Chap 1-12 which covers about 12 years in time; Peter and the 12 kingdom Apostle are the principal characters in the first 12 chapters. Second Division Chap 13 - 28

To what does each division pertain?

The first division is kingdom teaching and the second division is to the Church.

Why do the Gospels pertain primarily to Israel? (Consider Matthew 15:24)

Jesus came to minister to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Mt 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. Jesus was saying that He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and it is not meet to take the children's bread and feed it to the gentiles. But the woman said, Mt 15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Mt 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. The gospel had to go to the Jew first. But the nation of Israel rejected the gospel and so from Chap 13 on God began to deal with the gentiles.

In Ga 2:7 Paul was referring to the Jerusalem conference which is also in Acts 15. Ga 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) (circumcision means Israel)

Who were the Kingdom apostles?

Ac 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, Matthias, and Judas the brother of James. And there was Judas Iscariot, but he is now off of the scene.

Who is the chief apostle in each division of this book?

Peter is in Division one and Paul is in Division 2.

To whom was Peter especially called to minister? (Read Galatians 2:7,8)

Ga 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles: (circumcision means Israel). Peter was called to minister to Israel.

To whom was Paul sent to minister?

The Gentiles

Who is the chief apostle to the Church and for this Church Age?

The Apostle Paul

Where do we find the teaching for the Church?

In Paul's epistles.

What purpose does Acts fulfill in being placed between the Gospels and Paul's Epistles?

The Book of Acts forms an important bridge between the four Gospel Records and the Epistles. It ties us from the four gospels to the Church epistles. If we did not have the book of Acts, we

would wonder what happened after Christ rose from the dead and resurrected into heaven. It also tells what happened to the Apostles. The book of Acts is also historical, and it is prophetic. It has typical teaching, and it has dispensational teaching. It is a pattern book. We learn what to do and how to do it. It tells us of doctrine. It is a pivotal book. It is a book of transition. We will see the ministry going from the four gospels to the epistles. We will go from Judaism to Christianity. We see the gospel in the book of Acts going to the Jew only and then going to Jew and Gentile or to all people.

When will God resume His dealings with Israel? (Romans 11:25)

When the church is complete and in heaven.

Ro 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (what is the mystery) lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

Ro 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: When will v26 be fulfilled? At the end of the church age. After the Church age, God resumes His dealings with Israel as a nation.

Where will the Church be at that time?

The Church will be complete and in heaven.

Why was Christ's ministry of miraculous works and wonderful teaching cut short?

Jesus did not come to establish a long ministry but gave Himself to do God's will. So He fulfilled that ministry in 3 ½ years. But we still see His ministry going on because he gave commandments to the Apostles. The ministry of Jesus is to continue through His followers. And it is continuing to this day.

John the Baptist had announced "the axe laid at the root of the trees" (Matthew 3:10). Both Jews and Gentiles proved themselves unable to bring forth good fruit, for "there is none good, no not one; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:12, 23). Therefore, God's judgment axe, the law, cut down the trees through Christ's substitutionary death on Calvary. He was "cut off, but not for Himself," but for all men - Daniel 9:26. "We thus judge that One died for all; therefore all died" (II Corinthians 5:15).

How was the fact of His resurrection established?

Ac 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

The Lord Jesus was not just resurrected and immediately taken to heaven. He was on the earth for 40 days after the resurrection. 40 is the number of testing. Christ resurrection was tested and proven to all that He was resurrected.

How did He continue His ministry after His resurrection and ascension?

Through His followers (believers).

Ac 1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (About 10 days=many days hence)

They were to wait for the promise which was that the Holy Ghost would come. Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Of what did Jesus instruct His disciples after His resurrection?

They were to wait and should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. John the Baptist was a witness of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus.

What was the promise of the Father?

Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

The promise was that the Holy Spirit would come and be our Comforter.

Who else had witnessed of the Holy Ghost baptism?

John the Baptist was a witness of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the Lord Jesus.

What did the disciples hope would take place at this time?

Ac 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. The disciple's hope was that He would restore the kingdom to Israel. Lu 24:19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

There hope was that He would restore the kingdom to Israel and kick out the Roman Government Rulers.

Was the Church Age a hidden truth to the Old Testament prophets?

Yes the Church age was hidden, but God knew the times and the seasons. Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. This what God wanted them to do in Ac 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

It is so important for people to be filled with the Holy Ghost. We need that power to witness. (unto me in Jerusalem Chap 1-8) After Chap 8 they take the gospel to Samaria, and then from chap 13-28 they take the gospel to the utter most parts of the earth.

How were the believers to be equipped for their ministry for Jesus?

They were to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is so important for people to be filled with the Holy Ghost. We need that power to witness. (unto me in Jerusalem Chap 1-8) After Chap 8 they take the gospel to Samaria, and then from chap 13-28 they take the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth

Did Jesus ascend into heaven in His body?

Ac 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

How will He come in like manner as He was taken up? In bodily form. We will see Him just as they saw Him go up to heaven in bodily form. He will return to mount called Olivet. Acts 1:12.

What emphatic statement did the angels make concerning Jesus' return?

Ac 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Jesus will come back in bodily form.

From what mount did Jesus ascend?

He will return to mount called Olivet. Acts 1:12. Also, Zec 14:4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. Jesus will return to the same place He was taken up into heaven.

To what place will He return? (Read Zechariah 14:1-4)

Jesus will return to the same place He was taken up into heaven. He will return to the mount of Olives.

What did the disciples do when they returned to Jerusalem?

Went to the upper room and continued with one accord in prayer.

Acts 1:13 They went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. Ac 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

How many met together in one accord? About 120 souls.

Acts 1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

Who was the chief spokesman among the disciples?

Peter was to the forefront.

With what was Peter deeply concerned?

Ac 1:16 was his concern. Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. This refers to Ps 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. Ac 1:17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. The concern was to find a replacement for Judas.

What had happened to Judas?

He hung himself.

Ac 1:18 describes what happened to Judas. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.²⁰ For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. See also Ps 69:25 for another interpretation.

His bishoprick refers to the office that Judas had.

Did Judas repent and accept Jesus as His personal Savior?

No, he did not repent and accept the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior. Joh 13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

It was the custom to dip the sop and give it to your friend first. But Judas rejected the gift of God. Judas receives the last token of love, he is now given over to Satan.

Ac 1:25 from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. He went to his own place. Also Ac 1:17 For he (Judas) was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. He had obtained part of this ministry and never the fullness of the ministry. Also if you look at every place Judas addressed the Lord Jesus, it was never Lord, but Master or Rabbi. 1Co 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Also Mr 14:21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Judas never had any repentance. In Mt 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? It says here that he repented himself but that word is regretted. There is no repentance from Judas.

Joh 13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. Jesus was saying of the twelve that they were clean by the blood of the Lamb, yet not all referring here to Judas.

What had David prophesied of the one who should betray Jesus?

Ps 69:25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

This is an interpretation not a translation. Ps 109:8 Let his days be few; and let another take his office. This refers to his bishoprick.

How did it happen that Judas had an official place among them?

One reason Judas was chosen that the scripture be fulfilled.

For what purpose must one be chosen to take his office?

The number 12 is the number of the kingdom fullness.

Acts 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. It was to be a witness. And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Ac 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship.

Who was chosen to succeed Judas?

Matthias was chosen. Ac 1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

What qualifications must he have?

He had to be with Jesus throughout His 3 ½ years of ministry. Ac 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. It had to one who had been with the Lord from the very beginning just the other eleven were. He must be a witness of the Lord's resurrection.

Ac 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

How was he chosen?

They cast lots. Acts 1:24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

When one man fails God, does He have another one ready to step into his place?

Yes. The Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men. All these things are written "on tables that are hearts of flesh" (II Corinthians 3:3). The Lord does not lack men to carry on His work today.

Start Tuesday September 26 2024

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Questions on Chapter Two

1. How many days were there from Christ's resurrection to the Day of Pentecost?

There were 50 days. Pentecost was on the 50th day after Christ's resurrection.

The "not many days" (1:5) were ten days to which we add the "forty days" (1:3) and we have the time from Christ's resurrection to Pentecost, or 50.

Ac 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Ac 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Why 50 days and why on Pentecost?

2. What had Israel been instructed to do on this feast day Passover- Lev. 23:17?

They were to bring a new meat offering unto the Lord. (meat means meal offering) They were to bring out of your habitations **two wave loaves**. Le 23:17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of **fine flour**; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.

Le 23:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: The first fruits was a reference to Christ's resurrection. **** The first fruit always signifies that there is more to come. So if there is a first, there must be a last fruit. It signifies, there is more to come and it tells us of the resurrection of Christ. **Where does meal come from?** Wheat. How do we get flour or meal? The wheat is ground up to make flour or meal. It speaks of the trials that Jesus went through.

Le 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: This would be 49 days. 16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. **** Here is the feast of Pentecost. This new meal offering unto the Lord simply means that God was doing something new and in the book of Acts it tells us of the new thing God was doing. He is switching over from the nation of Israel to the Church. This is brought out in this particular portion scripture.

Le 23:17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD. These two loaves are figurative of Jew and Gentile. Note that these 2 loaves were baked with leaven. What does it mean that we are baked with leaven? It means that God's judgment has come upon this leaven in Christ Jesus. When you put yeast in bread it raises, but when you bake it, it stops the rising. The sin operating in our lives has been baked. It is annulled as we are the 2 wave loaves

offered before the Lord. Christ has bore our judgment. But in v6 the unleavened is representative of Christ. Le 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. Baken bread with leaven typifies a believer in their identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. That annuls the leaven in our lives. It is as we reckon ourselves to be dead. Ro 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Also Ro 6:6-12.

This feast of Pentecost was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. As we see ourselves are baken with leaven or in other words that sin has been annulled, we can now offer our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God. Ro 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Ac 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own **power**. The word **power is authority**.

Ac 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be **witnesses unto me** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The word "witness, or testimony" occurs about 50 times in the book. It expresses our duty to God.

Ac 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

The phrase "one accord" (1:14) occurs seven times, a significant feature of those days. It is a musical term. If we walk in the Spirit, there will be harmony among us as Christ's instruments, "making melody in our hearts to the Lord" (Corresponds to Ephesians 5:19).

Eph 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Does God reckon that we too died (were baked) with Him? Give Scripture.

Baken bread with leaven typifies a believer in their identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. That annuls the leaven in our lives. It is as we reckon ourselves to be dead. Ro 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Also Ro 6:6-12.

How can the sin and evil that is now in our flesh be kept inactive? (Consider Rom. 6: 11)

Ro 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We must reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin. That is how it becomes baken in our lives. We reckon or identify ourselves with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

What sacrifices may we now offer to God? (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15,16)

Our Body; and the Sacrifice of Praise;

As we see ourselves baken with leaven or in other words that sin has been annulled, we can now offer our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God. Ro 12:1

Heb 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

In Ho 14:2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. We an interesting term here, “calves of our lips.” God wants the sacrifice of praise from our lips.

What three supernatural manifestations did God send on the Day of Pentecost?

1) Rushing mighty wind; 2) cloven tongues like as of fire, 3) They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Wind, Fire, and tongues were the three.

Ac 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

For what purpose was this sign given? (Consider Acts 1:8)

Tongues is a sign of the power being given.

Ac 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

What great change do we find in Peter after he was filled with the Holy Spirit?

Peter got bold. He had just received the power of the Holy Ghost. Ac 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: Peter stands up boldly and comes to the forefront.

The Passover

Lu 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, **strengthen thy brethren.** Jesus in repeated Peter's name which is a hint of His frustration at this point. Matthew's record of this feast announces Jesus declaration: “All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad” (Matthew 26:31). Peter's answer to that is: Though all men shall be offended because of thee yet will I never be offended (22:33). Peter undoubtedly meant what he said, but he did not understand his own weakness, nor the forces beyond his control which would work against him.

We are given some insight into the spirit world as it says, Satan hath desired to have you. Nothing has changed since the days of Job, when Satan had to get God's permission to touch one of His own. We can be encouraged that our enemy can go no further than God allows, but we

must realize that in both cases, God granted Satan permission. In Luke we are told that Satan was going to “sift you as wheat,” and **we can expect no less in our own lives.**

God will use Satan as an instrument to separate our flesh from the spirit. **Jesus’ prayer is two-fold.** He did not pray that Satan would not be able to touch this disciple, but rather that Peter’s faith would not fail.

The chaff must be blown away in our lives, so that genuine faith will stand as gold, even as Job declared in Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Secondly, Jesus petitioned, When thou art converted, **strengthen thy brethren.** When did that happen that Peter strengthened his brethren? Peter got bold. He had just received the power of the Holy Ghost. Ac 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: Peter stands up boldly and comes to the forefront to strengthen his brethren.

Peter quoted a prophecy from Joel under the anointing of the Spirit?

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; Peter quoted from Joel 2:28-32 in Ac 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out 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: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Garden of Gethsemane

Lu 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. 47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? 49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? 50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

Joh 18:10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Even this did not last, for Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear and healed him (22:51). Suffer ye thus far, is not only a message to Peter, but to all mankind, that this is the road which God had ordained for Jesus and any effort to change it would not be allowed.

Notice in Joh 18:7 Then asked he (Jesus) them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, **let these go their way:** Get This? All men are set free by the judgment that fell upon Christ. Let these

go, He says. The death of the Passover Lamb in Egypt preserved Israel's firstborn from death, **typical of Christ's death for all those who believe.**

Both Peter and Judas failed in this hour, but with what a difference. One was an unbeliever, the other a believer. There is a great gulf between such. One deliberately sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, betraying the Lord with a kiss; the other denied Him not deliberately, but unintentionally. Lu 22:33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Peter followed the officers as they took Jesus and led Him away. Judas could not believe that He would not resist them; for he had seen Him many times manifest His power and escape His enemies. But **Peter was flesh, even as we**, and the fear of the rulers who appeared to be having their way was over him. Peter loved the Lord and believed that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. Judas had no faith in His claims. He had viewed the Lord in action and saw His mighty miracles and His life of victory and heard His surpassing words of wisdom firsthand; and yet was not moved to accept and cling to Him. He will always remain a mystery. Peter on the other hand, we understand. There is a wide gulf between the two. The Lord can restore the erring and weak believer, as was the case with Peter; but He can do nothing for those who refuse His mercy.

When did the last days begin? (See Heb. 1:2)

They began at Pentecost. Dispensational **these are the last days**. Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; In these last days, God is speaking to us by His Son.

When will verses 19 and 20 be fulfilled?

Ac 2:19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

V19 and 20 will be fulfilled at the beginning of the next age at the first seven years of tribulation when Christ will be sitting upon the throne.

What is the "great and notable day of the Lord"?

It is a 1,000 years long. Peter says in 2Pe 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It is the day when the nations are judged. It speaks of judgment that is coming. Ac 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that **great and notable day of the Lord** come:

What promise is given here for salvation in the midst of judgment?

In the midst of all the judgment, we see mercy in Ac 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Mercy is offered in the midst of judgment.

How did God show His approval of Jesus of Nazareth while He walked among men?

Ac 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 21. Did Israel's rejection of their Messiah hinder God's purpose and plan?

God manifested His approval of Jesus by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, and they knew it, but they ignored all of the signs.

When was this purpose determined by God? (I Peter 1:20)

1Pe 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

This was determined and foreordained before the foundation of the world that Christ would come and die. God knew what was going to happen. Israel's rejection Christ did not hinder God's purpose and plans

Why was it not possible for the grave to hold Christ captive?

Ac 2:24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. It was impossible for the grave to hold Christ because Christ is holy; He is God; He is sinless.

What was the chief fact emphasized in Peter's sermon?

Peter always emphasizes Christ's resurrection.

Ac 2:25- 28 David was speaking or prophesying concerning Christ and Israel put a lot of stock in what David said. Then Peter in v 29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

Peter always emphasized Christ's resurrection.

What evidence was before their eyes and ears, that Jesus was at God's right hand?

Ac 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. They saw this and witnessed this.

Name seven basic facts concerning Jesus which are stated by Peter.

1. Ac 2:29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Christ was resurrected

2. 30 Therefore being a prophet, (that is David) and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; According to the flesh, Christ was of the lineage of David. He was the seed of David.

3. Ac 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This was evident because Jesus walked among them and they could see His flesh.

4. Ac 2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

5. Ac 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Because Jesus was now seated at the right hand of the Father, God had now poured out the Holy Spirit whom they now have seen.

6. Ac 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: (David was not speaking of himself but prophesying of Christ) but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

7. Ac 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. God made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

The Holy spirit had His work in this because of Ac 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? The Holy Spirit convicted them of their sin. Prick means to pierce thoroughly and that is what the Holy Ghost did.

Then in Ac 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Ac 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Repentance is an inward work that God does when He convicts us of our sin. The Holy Ghost gets through to my heart that I was a sinner. This many times so difficult, because man doesn't want to hear it. Repentance is necessary. It is a change in attitude and direction toward God. This is an inward work.

Then he says be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. This is an outward act. Repentance, an inward work, and is a result of conviction by the Holy Ghost and baptism is an outward act, is the result of yielding our will to God's will. We submit our will to God's will and submit ourselves to be baptized. It is a result of yielding our will to God's will. They showed their faith by yielding to be baptized. To the Jew water baptism was very important; it was like cutting off all earthly ties. Water Baptism is symbolic of our identification in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It was also in the name of Jesus Christ that they were baptized not in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

What effect had this message upon the hearers?

Ac 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? The word pricked means to pierce thoroughly or sting to the quick. The Holy Spirit brought the inward conviction of sin. They said, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter gives them the answer. Ac 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Although they had rejected and crucified their Messiah, what good news did Peter declare?

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and receive the Holy Ghost was the good news declared. The promise was to receive the Holy Ghost. Ac 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The one that they crucified, God had brought Him to His right hand. Ac 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Ac 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. This was taken from Ps 110:1.

Ac 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. The word Lord here means supreme in authority. God made Him Christ and Lord. This Christ is the anointed, the Messiah. They had crucified the Messiah, the one that they had hope in, the one that they had been looking for.

Although water baptism is not essential to salvation, what does it symbolize?

Our identification in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Then he says be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. This is an outward act. Repentance, an inward work, is a result of conviction by the Holy Ghost and water baptism is an outward act, and is the result of yielding our will to God's will. We submit our will to God's will and submit ourselves to be baptized. It is a result of yielding our will to God's will. They showed their faith by yielding to be baptized.

What did it mean especially to a Jew?

To the Jew water baptism was very important; it was like cutting off all earthly ties. In the Bible whenever they were ministering to Israel, water baptism was emphasized. Paul, when ministering to the Gentiles, water baptism was not emphasized as much, but it is still important to us. But to the Jew, water baptism was a real step of faith to submit their will to God's will. Water Baptism is symbolic of our identification in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

In whose name did the apostles baptize?

It was in the name of Jesus Christ that they were baptized not in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Unto whom was this gracious promise of verses 38, 39 given?

This promise includes all of us, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Ac 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Does it reach down to the present time?

This promise includes all of us, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Ac 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord

our God shall call. In John 14:1 -17 Jesus is talking here and he says, Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. V17 you must be born again to receive the Holy Spirit, the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

Also notice that He says but you know Him, talking to the disciples. Why did they already know the Holy Spirit? Because the disciples were already saved because in Joh 13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. This “not all referring to Judas.” But here the disciples were clean; they are not sinners in the world, they were saved.

So Jesus says, but ye know Him for He dwelleth with you. The disciples already had an experience with the Holy Ghost, for he dwelleth with you. Then he says further,” and shall be in you.” When did the Holy Spirit enter into the disciples? On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out! Then they became filled with the Holy Spirit. We also have a relationship with the Holy Ghost or we could never accept and receive Christ as our Savior. Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Because it is the Holy Ghost that convicts us of our sin and brings us to repentance. Further Paul writes in Ro 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? God’s goodness brings us to repentance.

What was the result of Peter's message?

They received his word and were baptized. And a harvest took place, first 120 and now 3,000 souls were added. Ac 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. The word gladly means with pleasure.

What was the apostles' doctrine?

Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine means instruction. And in oneness, they were in the oneness of doctrine which brings out fellowship and then breaking of bread or communion, then in prayer. The fear or reverence came upon every soul. Ac 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

What does the breaking of bread symbolize?

Communion

What brings about real fellowship among the people of God?

Discerning the Lord’s body as one.

It is the oneness of doctrine or being in one accord in one place is that which brings out fellowship and then breaking of bread or communion, then in prayer.

Can we do any better than to follow the simplicity of those early disciples?

No!

The Holy Spirit was leading them in the all things common. Ac 2:44-47 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; If the nation Israel had accepted the Lord Jesus this would have happened. This refers to the year of Jubilee in Lev 25 which would have happened if Israel would have accepted the Messiah and if had of accepted Him, we would not have had a Church age, but God knew.

Why did not the believers continue to "have all things common"? (Acts 8:1)

The nation Israel was scattered and Israel rejected Christ. Ac 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

They left the place of one accord in one place that originally started with in Ac 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

Who were added to the Church?

Such as should be saved and such as were being saved.

It was having favor with all the people, the Lord added to the church daily. Ac 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Who added them?

The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved, or the meaning were being saved daily.

How were they added?

They were in one accord in one place. The Holy Spirit was working here as that continued daily, with one accord and attending to the things of God. (i.e. Breaking bread or communion, singleness of heart, praising God, worshiping) Ac 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Did that make them a member of the Body of Christ?

Yes!

Believing in the Lord Jesus is what made them a member of the Lord's body. Ro 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Who is the only Head of the Church?

Jesus Christ

Is He fully able to direct all the members of His Body?

"If ye then ... know how to give good gifts unto your children;

how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Luke 11:13

Yes He has sent the Spirit of truth who guides us into all truth. Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Questions on Chapter Three

Acts Chapter 3

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Review: Ac 1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father. Now think of this for moment. We are in that 40-day period between Christ's resurrection and His ascension into heaven. Then in 10 days is Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out. Then the conversation turned to the future, to the time when Jesus would return to heaven and the disciples would be left with orders to preach the Gospel. I can imagine that it easy to think of the excitement around the table that day. What do you want us to do, Lord? When do we get started? Should we draft a master-plan and hit the road.

James, you and John get started on the mission statement. Peter, work out a 10-year strategy. Matthew, you're an accountant, aren't you? Run some numbers, let's see how much money we're going to need. We've got to get the ball rolling. Lord, where do you want us to begin? But hear Jesus' answer. Don't do anything yet. Go back to Jerusalem and wait there until the Holy Spirit comes. I'm sure this must have come as a major surprise. God's answer was to wait for the Holy Spirit. When the time comes, God will give them the signal to move out. Until then, wait on the Lord. I imagine that was the last place many of them wanted to be. Jerusalem was no longer a safe city. If you were a follower of Jesus, anyplace on earth was safer than Jerusalem.

Getting out of town was not a bad idea. Jesus commanded them to stay. Jerusalem already knows about Jesus. This city murdered and crucified Him. These disciples were in the middle of the battlefield and if it was us, we would want out of there. Have you ever wondered why God doesn't speak to us more clearly? Could it be because we are going so fast that we can't hear His voice? Especially when everything round us seems to be breaking up around us. Waiting rearranges our priorities, slows down our schedule, and forces us to listen to God. Jesus gave specific instructions in three areas:

He told them what to do -Wait. He told them where to do it. - In Jerusalem. He told them what to wait for. - The Promise of the Father, which was the coming of the Holy Spirit.

But He didn't tell them how long to wait. They had no idea whether they should wait a week, a month, a year, ten years, or for 40 years. If our expectation is based upon God, my soul, lives for God; I live with only this care, to bless Him.

Acts 3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

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Significant Facts: The Holy Spirit was poured out at the third hour or about 9 am in the morning. It was the ninth hour or about 3PM in the afternoon. They encountered a lame man who is typical of Israel. What God was about to do for this lame man, God was showing Israel that this is exactly what He would do for the Nation of Israel^{3:2} And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; This really what Israel was, they were given the temple and they were given the commandments of God and they were lame. They never could walk or keep the law. The law was Holy, just, and good and in Ro 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, or in other words the flesh could not keep the law. The spiritual condition of Israel, as figured by the lame man.

The lameness illustrates Israel's helplessness after 1500 years of tutorage under the law (Galatians 3:21-25). When Christ came, the Law, the Tutor, or Schoolmaster, was no longer needed. The Law could not give life, nor sustain life. This teaches us that the Law could NOT bring Israel into a close fellowship with God. Only the grace of God can bring us into that close fellowship with God. The law can never give life, nor can it sustain life, nor can it heal. The only thing that the law did was reprove, correct, or chasten, and condemn the sinner. Only by God's grace alone is sin condemned but not the sinner. This is the wonderful grace of God.

God's purpose for Israel if they had received the Gospel was to bless them. This was an object lesson for Israel. They had laid daily at the gate of the temple and asked alms, or begged and they could not walk. They were dependent upon God's grace and mercy. It was only for them that entered the temple. They were never in close fellowship with God just as this lame man never did.

God was offering them so much. Jesus told Peter this in Mt 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Peter had these keys, and we see him opening the doors to the gentiles and to the Jew and it was up to them to go in. Peter said, but such as I have, give I to thee, which is a new creation and Spirit filled.

Ac 3:7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and

praising God: This is the place of fellowship that has now opened to this man, and it would be open to anyone that would take the gospel that was being offered. These people go into the temple and saw this mighty work of God. They were leaping and praising God.

Now here is the opportunity for Peter to give a message as he says in Ac 3:12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? We did not do this. It wasn't our power or strength or Holiness. Then he goes on, he honors the God of their Fathers.

Ac 3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, **Witnesses**

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when he was determined to let him go.¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; ****Peter honors God.

He glorified Jesus Christ and he doesn't just stop there, but he says whom you crucified and delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go in Acts 3:14. Many have referred to the Jews as the crucifier of Jesus. But it was my sin that nailed Jesus to the cross. It wasn't anymore the Jews sins as it was ours that nailed Jesus to the cross. It was the sin of all of humanity that nailed Jesus to the cross. They were offered the same salvation as we were. God was ready to forgive them as a whole nation had they accepted Him at that time. But here they denied (or refused) the Holy One, the Lord Jesus. And we see more of that as go on in Acts all the up the turning away of the Jews unto the Gentiles.

God would have given them the same mercy that He gave this lame man, but they are guilty of denying their Savior. God was telling Israel that He wanted to give them the same mercy that He gave this lame man, but they are guilty of denying their Savior. Why didn't Israel receive Peter's testimony which honored the God of their fathers? If they would have accepted Peter's words, they would have had to admit that they crucified their Messiah.

Peter said in Acts 3:17, I know through ignorance that you did this but in Heb 10:26 it says For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Israel and the rulers had ignorance, but when the truth came to them, they were not ignorant any longer. They sinned willfully because they had rejected Christ. This was the willful sin when they rejected Christ.

Notice: Ac 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made **this man strong**, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. ***** It is faith in what Jesus has done in the whole work of redemption; in the work at Calvary; when we say in the name of Jesus, it is faith in what Jesus has done. He is the very substance of faith. **What makes us strong? Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;**

That faith is even by Christ or as Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is the author and finisher. He is the very substance of faith.

When did faith come into our hearts? It was when we received Christ. In the Old Testament God said of Israel, children in whom is no faith, but we have faith. De 32:20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. When we received Christ each of us have been given a measure of faith. We have received the faith of Christ and as we grow, that faith will grow. Faith is active within us; it is not blind.

How is it that we grow? Mt 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. We cannot make ourself grow spiritually. The only way to

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grow in the natural is by eating and the same is true of the spiritual. We must feed on the word of God and thereby we will grow. We cannot put on the glory of God. It must come forth as a matter of course as we take in Christ and the glory of God is revealed in our lives, just like the glory of the flower is revealed by God.

All our desire to naturally grow will not help us grow unless we take the proper means. It is just so in our spiritual life. Fretting and straining will not enlarge our spiritual manhood. God has Himself revealed the secret of growth. Paul said in Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye **walk** worthy of the **vocation** wherewith ye are called. The word **vocation** is the same Greek word as **high calling** in Phil 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Then again Paul says Eph 4:3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That word endeavoring means to study. It is the same Greek word as 2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Spiritual growth will take the inward attitude and walking will take diligence.

Paul said in Ro 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Therein refers to the verses before. This verse means that there are levels of faith. There are levels of believing God. It is as we take in the Gospel and as we are diligent in searching out the scripture, we too go from faith to faith. That is from level of faith to a greater level of faith.

Ro 4:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. This verse refers to the steps of faith of our father Abraham. In the life of Abraham, he didn't believe God all at once. It is step by step. Abraham was promised his son Isaac and it took 25 years of walking and believing and trusting God before he had his son Isaac. In that time there were many testing's of that faith, including having the son Ishmael which was not the promised son. In this walk Abraham had to learn faith step by step and we do too.

Peter said, But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is no growth except by progression. The way to grow, then, is to go forward; the way to be steadfast is to progress; the way forward, according to the apostle, is to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There can be no growth in grace except as we grow in our knowledge of Christ. Jesus said, Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. How we need the word of God.

Paul said, 1Th 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when **ye received the word of God** which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. So, receive the pure word of God, and we will grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Praise His name! Oh, may the Lord Jesus Christ help us, by giving all diligence, to make the most of our spiritual life and all its opportunities and resources of grace and lay up for

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ourselves treasures on high which shall never fade away. How will this happen? Study! Study! Giving all diligence to the word of God! Jesus is the word! Peter was looking forward to Christ's return; to the kingdom age. Ac 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of **restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. The times of restitution is the kingdom age.

The Millennial Age here called the restitution of all things.
The restitution or the restoration of all things. This is when Christ will return again. Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.
If Israel as a nation had of done what Peter said in Ac 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; then Christ would have come back and the kingdom age would have begun at that time; the Millennial reign of Christ.

In this third chapter, the return and presence of the Jesus is announced. The entire period of Israel's partial blindness is covered by this chapter and their deliverance offered to them. Of course, the apostle Peter did not then know how long the Lord would be detained in the heavens. He was made to know later on reading Psalm 90:4 and Hosea 6:2, whereby he learned that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (II Peter 3:8)
2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Notice the last verses of Chapter Three. Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed (3:25). Note what followed Unto you first (the Jews), God having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you (Jews) in turning every one of you from your iniquities. The great responsibility is upon Israel for the salvation of the nations. If the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world; what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead (Romans 11:15-31). The Holy Spirit shows us the future of the unfolding of the Divine Plan. In Chapter Two, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit was manifested, and the resurrection of Jesus proved. In this third chapter, the return and presence of the "Prince of Life" is announced. The entire period of Israel's partial blindness is covered by this chapter and their deliverance offered to them. Of course, the apostle Peter did not then know how long the Lord would be gone to heaven. It was revealed to him later as we will see in the Acts.

ACTS - 4

Page 1

Acts 4:1-3 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. The apostles constantly tried to make Israel see Jesus was the Son of God whom the Jews had just crucified. Those Spirit filled apostles proved that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Jews own Scriptures. They refused the Holy Spirit's effort to show them God's grace. They were caught up in their legality with hated poison towards anything to do with Christ.

There were three main sects in Israel, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. The Pharisees were wealthy and the Sadducees were the fewer in number and had most of the ruling seats of the **Sanhedrin council. There were 70 members of the Sanhedrin council and one high priest. This goes back to David's day when he chose 70 elders. So, there were 71 members on this Sanhedrin council.** The Sadducees were the strongest politically on the Sanhedrin council. The high priest was usually from this sect.

The Sadducees bitterly stirred against the disciples when they preached through Christ the resurrection of the dead. They did not believe in the resurrection; also, they were jealous because they were the religious leaders of that day. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of Christ. They denied personal immortality, future judgment and the existence of angels or spirits. They held the freedom of their own wills to even reject divine wisdom. They rejected God doing anything at all. They denied all of these things.

During the time of Jesus, the Sadducees were the political elite of Palestine. The primary distinction between Pharisees and Sadducees was their disagreement about the resurrection of the dead and an afterlife. Sadducees were upper-class wealthy men mostly from Jerusalem who made up the Jewish upper classes. Pharisees came from all economic classes. Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead and an afterlife. The Sadducees did not believe in either of these. The Pharisees believed in a realm of spirit and angels. The Sadducees did not. The New Testament does not mention the Essenes group of the Jews. According to history, the Essenes were a Jewish sect somewhat resembling the Pharisees. They lived lives of ritual purity and separation. They originated about 100 B.C. and disappeared from history after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Essenes did not recognize Jesus as Messiah.

Acts 4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was **about five thousand.** 5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. Rapid growth is taking place from the efforts of the apostles and others of the Jerusalem church, NOW NUMBERING 5,000 men. The Gospel message is growing. The message preached included the most amazing good news ever heard. 1- Jesus of Nazareth had conquered death. 2- He had arisen from the grave! 3- This DID NOT fit into the theology of the Sadducees. 4- It was not a message they wanted to hear. Instead of listening to the message, these Sadducees tried to silence the preachers. **Persecution never hinders God's word.** It can never hinder the new creation.

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These groups of the Jews were filled with mockery, and indignation therefore crucifying to themselves Christ afresh. Acts 4:7 And when they (Jews) had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? What a great question! The Apostles desired that this very question be asked of them. They knew they had the HIGHEST authority available for the message they were proclaiming.

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done **to the impotent man**, by what means he is made whole. Now Peter answers their question by what power, or in what name, they had done this They realized this wonderful miracle that had happened, and they could not deny; but they did not wish to receive it as Divine.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them ... Acts 4: 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. What a complete and convincing reply! Their critical question gave the apostle the opportunity to emphasize the NAME, which is above every name. The word “name,” refers to Jesus. It occurs seven times in this chapter. That is very significant. Peter wanted everyone everywhere to know by what authority he was preaching the message he preached!

Remember in Matthew 1:21 the **angel said to Joseph in a dream, Thou shalt call His Name Jesus**; for He shall save His people from their sins. From His birth, the Jews hated His name. The Stone which the Jews rejected; God made the Head of the corner. Note these wonderful words: Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. He is further telling them that their ministry is over. It is only by Christ Jesus. It is not by all their rituals and sacrifices and work in the temple. The priesthood is now given to our High Priest Jesus Christ whom they had crucified.

Why did the apostles from the beginning urge the people to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38). We read throughout this book that the people were baptized in Jesus name, and in no other name. Not once is it written that anyone was baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. God hath made Him both Lord and Christ (Anointed), this Jesus whom ye crucified. The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus. Moses wrote of Him, saying, Him shall ye hear in all things. Believers were added to the Lord, and to Him only. Him did God exalt with His right hand, a Prince, and a Savior (Acts 2:37; 3:13, 22; 5:14, 31). Everything is done in Jesus’ name.

Matthew 28:19 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **This scripture will be observed when the Lord returns with the Church, His Body, of which He is the Scriptural Head.** He will then be given all rule and authority by His Father and will reign one thousand years. Really, they who baptize in the Name of the Trinity, pull the millennial age into this Church Age, which robs Jesus Christ of the exalted and honored place which the Father gave Him as the Head of the Church.

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Compare these scriptures about the name of Jesus.

Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. And Col 3:23. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; I Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by **the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1Cor 1:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 1Cor 5:4 **In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ; 1Cor 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are **justified in the name of the Lord Jesus**, and by the Spirit of our God.; Philippians 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and **given him a name which is above every name**: 10 That at **the name of Jesus** every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; All in the mighty power of the Name of Jesus.

The Sanhedrin actually helped to confirm the resurrection! Acts 4:13 Now when they (Sanhedrin) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, **they conferred among themselves**. **** They did NOT deny the resurrection of Jesus. Now Peter had just preached the resurrection and they heard it. Why did they not deny it?

They would have lost all credibility because many had seen the resurrected Jesus. They could not deny the resurrection. They could not deny the miracle that had happened before all of these witnesses when the Lord through the apostles healed the lame man. The ONLY thing they could do was to do what they did. **THEY CONFERRED AMONG THEMSELVES**. Can anyone believe that those unbelievers (Sanhedrin) would not have denied the resurrection if there had been any rational basis for doing so. And so, here is one of the places we can turn in the Bible and find support for the **FACT OF** the resurrection of Jesus Christ, courtesy of the Sanhedrin!

Even these rulers themselves could not deny that there had been a miracle of lame man being healed. But if they agreed that this was a good deed they would have to admit that they crucified the Messiah. They had so much religious pride. They were caught between a rock and hard place. The problem was by accepting this healing, they would be guilty of not accepting the Messiah when He came. Because they would have to admit that they crucified the Messiah. To admit this, it would have made them liars.

It was not the deed of healing this man, but that it was done in Jesus' name and that angered them. When they asked the question of Ac 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? This was another opportunity for Peter to preach another sermon. Remember that by asking these questions they led to more sermons preached. They were a spring board for Peter to come out with a message.

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Religious leaders can be the bitterest enemies of the truth. They think they are builders, but they are not. Heb 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Heb 10:26 For if we(any human) sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, The way of grace they know and how to get saved, but they rejected it. They knew but sinned wilfully which means rejector. The unsaved Jew rejected Christ. There is no other sacrifice than what Jesus did upon the cross by taking our sin upon Himself.

Ac 4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Quoted from Ps 118:22 *****They rejected Christ, who now was the Head of the Church. Peter is saying you religious leaders and the high priest, they were the builders, the craftsman, the engineers, they should have known this precious Stone. It was the builders that should have known, not the ordinary people, but these religious leaders should have recognized this stone. In other words, it had no value to them at all. They did not value it. Any craftsman would know how valuable this Stone was. They should have seen that this was a precious Stone, the Chief Corner Stone; they were craftsman, but they were blind. This Stone that they rejected God has made it the very Chief Corner Stone of the Church. Ps 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Ac 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ***** They have been with Jesus. These disciples were unlearned men. They made an impression upon these educated (Sanhedrin) of Israel. I want to encourage everyone here tonight. You may think what you have been hearing is so much or you still don't quite understand. Stick with it; you are learning. Isaiah 28:10 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little

This wisdom came from the Holy Spirit. It did not come from their own knowledge or their language or intellect or anything of themselves. They did take knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Stick with Jesus, He will show you these things. It is by the Holy Spirit this wisdom came and it will come the same way to you. Jesus said in Mt 10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Peter did not prepare a case to convince them of anything, the Holy Spirit led Him. He testified of Jesus Christ.

Paul said in 1Co 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 1Co 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: These verses of the Apostle Paul (1Co 2: 1- 6) describe how Peter went about this.

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This boldness was in the power of the Holy Spirit. They realized that this wisdom came from the Holy Spirit. It did not come from their own knowledge or their language or intellect or anything of themselves. Even though they told Peter and John not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, Ac 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. They were not going to go against God. The Holy Spirit was doing the work in the people of God. Ac 4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. *****They were to preach the truth. Their message was worth dying for. That is basically what is being said here by the apostles.

They are commanded not to speak any longer in the name of Jesus. This was an open and dangerous defiance of the power of the Jewish authorities. But the apostles were saying they would not be able to live with themselves if they disobeyed the Lord in order to obey the Sanhedrin. The apostles were NOT willing to be silent and obey such a command. They spoke in such a manner as to be distinctly understood. The apostles had no such problem speaking plainly and boldly and at whatever the cost!

What did the apostles do when they got back among their own company? They prayed for more boldness to speak the word in Jesus' name. Ac 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

God made it rumble!! And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke the word of God in Boldness. Ac 4:31 And when they had prayed, **the place was shaken** where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and **great grace was upon them all**. Amazing Grace! What a Sound!

Acts 5-6

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This is the exaltation of Jesus. This chapter corresponds to Joshua 7

Ac 5:1 But a **certain man** named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 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. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? ***** They were not one heart and soul with the others because they kept part of it for themselves. They were thinking of themselves, and they lied to the Holy Spirit. You cannot serve two masters. A house divided against itself cannot stand. They were not saved; Satan had filled their heart. Satan used these two to hinder the Gospel in the early church.

Money buys the goods of this world and they thought they could buy their way into the Church. There were two Ananias' in the Bible. One was with the Apostle Paul when he regained his sight. Do you know what was the first thing Paul saw when he regained his sight? It was Ananias which means grace of God. Grace is the thing that opens our eyes. The first thing that Paul saw was the grace of God. Notice Paul was not with anybody else. Now look at the other Ananias, the one who dropped dead here in Chap 5. His name also means grace of God. How come He dropped dead? The same name grace of God. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was set at the gateway of this Church Age as a warning against this subtle religious snare. When Paul regained his sight; it was **a certain disciple** at Damascus, named Ananias; but with Ananias and Sapphira, it was **a certain man**.

Do you know that every time in Acts that it mentions a believer, it says a certain disciple? Every time it talks about unbelievers, it says a certain man or woman. Look at a few examples: Acts 9:36 Now there was at Joppa **a certain disciple** named Tabitha, which if you read on, she is a believer. Acts 16:1 then Paul came to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, **a certain disciple** was there, named Timotheus the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Timothy was a believer. In Acts 8:9 But there was **a certain man**, called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: This man wanted to buy God's miracles. He was a certain man; he was not saved.

Then in Acts 10:1, there was **a certain man** in Caesarea called Cornelius. God sent Peter to his house. He was a certain man why? He wasn't saved yet. Cornelius gave alms or charity to the poor and his prayers and his alms giving is held as a memorial before God. God will move heaven and earth to reach the willing. In Acts 5, Ananias is here with Sapphira or Sapphira. **What does that mean grace and sapphire?** There is a collection of Jewish writings that is central to Rabbinic and Jewish religious law which says the following: It is written that God wrote the Ten Commandments on sapphire stone, and it is a special kind of sapphire called lapis-lazuli, sapphire. If you look up sapphire you will find lapis-lazuli next to the word sapphire. Its color is blue. So, what does scripture say? Ex 24:9 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: 10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a **paved work of a sapphire stone**, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

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It is said that sapphire stone is formed under intense heat and pressure. If you will recall the top part of Mount Sinai was burned but it was burned deep blue. And God wrote the Ten Commandments on Sapphire stones. Now with Ananias and Sapphira, we have the grace of God married to the law. What is this? Mixture! It is the ministry of death. This is what brings death in the church, its mixture. When Ananias went to Paul, it was pure grace. But the moment you try to bring grace and law in together, it becomes mixture and mixture is deadly. Mixture is the ministry of death. The result of the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira. Signs and wonders were wrought among the people (all with one accord in Solomon's porch) Ac 5:6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. When they picked up the stones, it showed they were agreeing with God's judgment. We too must accept God's judgment of the world and it is done by faith before it ever becomes a practical reality in our lives.

If the previous chapters are a forecast of millennial blessings to Israel, what would the judgment of this couple figure? The righteous judgment during the reign of Christ. This figures what will take place in the Kingdom age when Israel accepts Christ as described in Acts 5:14-16; 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed everyone.

We may ask, why then does God not judge people now as He did with Ananias and Sapphira then? We are in the age of grace. This judgment will take place in the Kingdom age. He judges through His word now. It is not a harsh thing, but the word of God is judging in our lives today. The Lord is in the midst of the church today by His word. Rev 1:13, Heb 4:12 and 1Cor 11:31. We let Christ judge our lives now by the word of God. 1Pe 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

****It is through His word that He corrects us if we will yield to it. Ac 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. They laid their hands on them and put them **in prison**. They were jealous. They did not want to lose their religious place. Indignation means envy. When the council met to decide their fate, they found them ministering and teaching the people. Also, Peter was instructed by the angel in Ac 5:19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. All the words of this life is the new creation life, The Divine life in you. Jesus Christ the hope of glory. And in Ac 5:21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. Ac 5:25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Ac 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

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The message the apostles continually kept before the people was the resurrection. The high priests called the council and all the senate, or elders together. They met; the high priest, captain, chief priests, officers, Sadducees; a religious senate. They had met about two months before and had put the Jesus to death. Now they show again their hatred against Him by refusing to heed His Spirit-anointed messengers of peace. They said to the apostles: Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine (not denying that it was scriptural) and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. They refused the cleansing power of the blood of the Lamb of God; they knew the consequence - banishment from God forever. Instead of yielding to conviction and turning to Christ, they officially decided to stop the mouths of God's faithful servants who were the channels.

But for **Gamaliel's wise counsel**, they would have slain them immediately, even as they killed Stephen and James later (Acts 7 and 12). Ac 5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space. Act 5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself 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 scattered, and brought to nought.

As Paul said Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; It is the power of the resurrection that they were constantly teaching. The Jewish council refused the Messiah. They tried to use their religious authority against Peter. Here Peter hit them with a brick between the eyes! Peter said this. Ac 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Ac 5:33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. Their hearts were hard. Ac 5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.***** The word rejoice means calmly happy or well off. This rejoice is only through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Chapter 6

Ac 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. *** Here they started murmuring against the leaders. In the Old Testament we have another place where the people complained. Ex 15:23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

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25 And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them. ***** Here we see the children of Israel murmuring against Moses. But God met their complaint there by casting the tree into the waters. This tree was figurative of Christ who in His humanity was cut down and cast into the waters and He sweetened the waters of God's judgment and now we can drink. The reality was that they were complaining against God. The devil tries to defeat and hinder the Word within and without and his tactics are the same today, but God uses this to strengthen us and make us overcomers.

He used the murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Paul tells us to take care of the widows and the qualifications of the widow were given in 1Ti 5:3-11 V3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. Ac 6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

In the priesthood in the Old Testament was the meeting of man's needs before God. It was the Levites that took care of the natural needs and we see that here. God is meeting the Levitical needs here by the deacons. The word deacon means servant. Notice the qualifications of a deacon; God did not mention anything about waiting tables or carrying a tray on your head. But they were to look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Why a honest man? Because if God chose one because he was a good waiter, we could say God chose me because I'm so good. But he was of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. The Holy Spirit gives all the glory to God.

There are 7 deacons chosen here and a lot of churches follow this pattern, but we never see that it was repeated in the book of Acts again. Seven we know is the number of perfection. Jesus told us that he that would be the greatest among us; let him be your servant. This is not telling us that we need exactly seven Deacons; we should all serve one another. Ac 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. *** This is the priestly ministry in prayer and this ministry of prayer was taking their needs unto God. This ministry of the word was a Levitical ministry where it would bring the things of God to the people. Mr 10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

In the Old Testament you had to be a priest but now every believer may enter into the priesthood. 1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Re 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. *** Now we are to enter into the priesthood. We can minister under the new covenant of grace in prayer and in His word unto God.

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Ac 6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

**** Stephen is a rather interesting person here. His name means a crown. He is a transitional figure because God dealings with man is about to change. There is an arch way between the 12 Apostles and Paul at this time. Israel as a nation rejects Christ and God begins to turn to the Gentiles as we will see more and more as we go into the book of Acts.

Ac 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. 11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council. Why did they choose exactly seven? It was because that was a transitional time. The number "seven" is pre-eminently the number of dispensational completeness. Why did the Lord choose Stephen? The Jews were rapidly drawing further and further away from Christ. Kingdom interests were receding. A transition period from the Kingdom to the Church required a transition figure, and he was Stephen.

Stephen was not an apostle. Jesus had not chosen him to be one, and yet the Holy Spirit made him a mighty man of God. They falsely accuse him. Ac 6:13 And set up false witnesses, which said, this man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. Lu 21:23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

**** He didn't say that He was going to destroy Jerusalem, like they accused in Acts 6:13, but that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

***They misquoted what was said and they still do that today. Satan always misquotes the scripture; he never quotes it correctly. He knows the scriptures but Satan changes the scriptures to serve himself. This is the last time that Israel has a chance to accept Christ till the end of the church age. Amos said, Amos 7:14-15; I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit; and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. Stephen's call was like that. God did not ask counsel of the Jewish priests, or senate, nor of the twelve apostles. He does what He wills and chooses whom He desires.

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When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the 120, God moved on with them and with those who received their word. They who believed the word of the apostles were counted as the congregation of the Lord. The same ongoing God held Stephen's listeners responsible to accept what he was saying to them, because Stephen's address was the voice of God to them. Today it is still the same. They who have received the message of faith and are walking in the liberty, joy, power, correction, and hope which it affords, are going on with the Lord; the Word of the Lord is mightily growing and prevailing. Others are becoming worldly and formal and selfish. These are the solemn facts. God moves on. If His people do not move with Him and in His way, they invariably move backward, lose out and grow cold.

Ac 6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Those who sat in the council saw the Supernatural manifestation of God's glory. You would think that this would surely convict them, but it didn't. They hardened their hearts. Stephen is a transitional figure here. God was giving them one last opportunity to accept Christ, but as a nation they rejected Christ. Stephen is a rather interesting person here. His name means a crown. He is a transitional figure because God dealings with man begin to change. There is an arch way between the 12 Apostles and Paul. Israel as a nation rejects Christ and God begins to turn to the Gentiles.

God was giving them one last opportunity to accept Christ, but as a nation they rejected Christ. Stephen was one of the first deacons but not an apostle. Stephen becomes the first Church martyr, but he was not the first martyr for the truth, Abel was. God always has had men willing to die for the Truth's sake. Heb 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mocking's and scourging's, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

Acts 7-8

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In Chapter 7 Stephen becomes the first Church martyr, but he was not the first martyr for the truth, Abel was. Ac 7:1 Then said the high priest, **Are these things so?** 2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Stephen begins his sermon by calling the people to listen. Stephen traces the history of Israel from Abraham to the time of Moses. He talks about God calling Abraham out of Mesopotamia and making a covenant with him. Stephen talks about the promise God made to Abraham that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land as slaves for 400 years but God would judge the nation they were enslaved to.

Stephen says God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. Abraham then had Isaac and Jacob who had 12 sons who became the 12 tribes of Israel. Stephen is addressing the **Sanhedrin council** who have arrested him for blasphemy against the temple and the law. God appeared to Abraham, in Mesopotamia, and called him out to start a new nation through which God would save mankind. God made a covenant with Abraham to give him the land of Canaan as an inheritance. God gave Abraham a vision of the coming Messiah which made him rejoice. The problem is how can a holy God have anything to do with sinful man. Man cannot solve this problem, only God can. God revealed the solution to this problem to Abraham. God would send his own Son to take on human nature, live a perfect life and die as an atoning sacrifice for sin.

The Old Testament pointed to the coming sacrifice of Christ. The blood of animals could never take away sin, only Christ's sacrifice could. God must punish sin because of His holiness and justice. The only way He could forgive sin was to provide the sacrifice of His own Son. We need to understand the message of the Old Testament to understand our need for Christ. The Old Testament shows the failure of man and the holiness of God. The **high priest's** question, **Are these things so?** Stephen in this chapter begins with God of the Glory, and he ends it with the Glory of God. He called Abraham on the witness stand first; then Stephen traced God's dealings with Israel and their attitude toward Him from that time to the introduction of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Stephen showed that Israel mistreated and resisted God's servants throughout those two thousand years. First, we have Joseph's brothers were moved with jealousy against Joseph, a perfect type of Christ, and sold him into Egypt (Acts 7:9). Then Moses' brethren "thrust him away," when he sought to deliver them from Egypt, saying, "Who made thee a ruler and judge over us? (Acts 7:27). Stephen emphasized the fact that as God had sent Moses and his brethren refused him, so God had sent Jesus, like Moses, of whom he wrote. He showed them that Jesus was the One who spoke to Moses in the mount (Exodus 33:2,14; Isaiah 63:9). Now, remember, that Stephen is before the Sanhedrin. He has been doing some mighty works. He has been disputing with the Jewish leaders. He, evidently, has been getting the best of them because they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke.

It reminds me of Jesus in Luke 6:10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

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So now, Stephen is going to give a defense specifically, of the charges against him, which are that he has spoken blasphemous words against Moses and against God. Against Moses means against the Law of Moses and against God means against the holy place or the temple of God. So, evidently, Stephen said some things that caused some of the Jewish people to say he's against Moses and against the temple. Now, we know that our Lord said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." And then the word went around, he said he was going to destroy the temple and he was going to raise it up again in three days. That is not what He meant.

Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. Also, the city of Jerusalem was demolished A. D. 71. In that period of rejection of the Jew, God was beginning His dealing with another people, the Church. So, we can see the background and what Stephen is going to do as he shows that what he has been saying is in accordance with the Old Testament. The Old Testament history is filled with Israel's rejection of those who spoke before of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Stephen used the Old Testament to answer the question posed by the High Priest. He went right back to Abraham and brings him in as a testimony.

Acts 7:1 is in reference to the prophesy of Jesus concerning the temple being destroyed in Mt 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Daniel in the Old Testament predicted the destruction of the temple of Stephen's time. Daniel in Da 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. Jerusalem was destroyed along with the temple in 70 AD by Titus. Acts was written before this because it was still standing at the timing of the writing of Acts.

Abraham was the father of Israel Ac 7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran. Ac 7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. ***** Notice that Abraham enjoyed his inheritance by faith. It is the same for us today, we enjoy our inheritance by faith which will one day be realized. Ac 7:8 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 begat the twelve patriarchs.*** The covenant of circumcision was a seal or the righteousness by faith.

(Rom 4:11) Ro 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: Stephen mentioned two individuals who were rejected by their brethren, but later became their deliverers. He mentioned Joseph who was very much a type of Christ. The other one mentioned was Moses.

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Ac 7:13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. ***Jesus will come the second time. Joseph was a type of Jesus who was rejected by his brothers just like Jesus was rejected by the nation of Israel. Then Moses is a type of Christ who came into this world under the sentence of death. In rejecting these two worthies of faith, the people were rejecting Christ. Joseph was the Son, Sufferer, and Sovereign. He was a type of the suffering Christ. Israel as a nation accepted their brother Benjamin, but they have never accepted the suffering Christ which Joseph typifies. Benjamin's name means "son of the right hand." They had rejected Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but yet Joseph became their deliverer. Moses a type of Christ; He was a deliverer and a ruler who was rejected by his people.

He was under the sentence of death as Christ was. Moses was tested for forty years and Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tested 40 days and nights. Ac 7:25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. Ac 7:27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didest the Egyptian yesterday?**** Moses was rejected by his people at his first coming to them just like Christ. Moses was rejected as a deliverer and a ruler, just as Christ. Ac 7:30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. The bush was burning, but was not consumed.

The bush is a picture or it represents of the nation Israel. It was the refining fire of judgment that was going on while they were in Egypt. They were under bondage an affliction and what Moses saw was God's people in that refining fire not being consumed. It was like in Daniel with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went they were cast into the fire, it burned off their bonds and affliction. After Moses brought them out of Egypt, they continued to show their ungodly and unregenerate heart. Ac 7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. ****They thrust Moses out from them and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. Because Israel worshipped idols and turned away from the God of their fathers, God permitted them to be taken into captivity. Ac 7:43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Steven said that God did this to Israel because of their heart condition. Moloch was child or human sacrifice.

They made these calves and offered sacrifice which was the work of their own hands. Even today Israel is a very proud people. They have not yet turned to the Lord. Because of their idolatry, they took up the tabernacle of Moloch. Moloch was a false god and judgment came upon them which happened in 606BC. Stephen goes right back to what they accused him of blaspheme about the temple. Ac 7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 50 Hath not my hand made all these things? *** God didn't need a temple, He made it all. Ac 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Ac 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it. ***** They really persecuted all of God's prophets, but here are a few Jeremiah, Daniel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

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They showed their final rejection of the Jesus. Ac 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, Ac 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. **** Notice their heart condition was not right. They harden their heart. They never accepted the crucified Christ, but they crucified Him afresh, Heb 6:4-6. The remaining seven verses of this chapter are very significant. This has important meaning. At the beginning of his address Stephen's face shone as the face of an angel, because he was filled with the Holy Spirit and Word. At the conclusion, he was still filled with the Holy Spirit. He looked up steadfastly into heaven.

What did he see? Spirit-anointed folks always behold special and wonderful things. He saw three objects - the heavens opened, the Glory of God, and Jesus standing. He began his sermon, believing God's Word, by declaring that the God of glory appeared to Abraham. This is the first time that phrase occurs. It tells us of a doctrine and hope of which Israel were ignorant, even the mystery of God (Ephesians 3:9). Now near the end, he sees, by revelation, the glory of God which his faith made him speak.

Eph 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

There were three things that Stephen did as he looked steadfastly heavenward. He saw the **heavens open, then the glory of God and he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God.** Ac 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. **Here Jesus is standing, but in Hebrews He is sitting.** Heb 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; **** The reason He is standing is if Israel had accepted Christ at that time, He would have come back right then for them and set up the kingdom, but they rejected Him. And so that is why in Hebrews He is sitting at the right hand of God because they did not accept Jesus.

Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Re 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

God is always slow to anger and plentiful in mercy. Probably for about seven years from His ascension, Jesus was standing at the Father's right hand, **waiting** for Israel to invite Him back. Through Peter and John, He had spoken to them and did mighty miracles. An earnest of millennial blessings, liberty, and power flowed in every direction in Jerusalem, filling the city with the doctrine of the Lord.

Two prayers Stephen uttered as he was dying. Receive my spirit and lay not this sin to their charge. Ac 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 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.

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What other Man had voiced similar prayers in His dying moments? Jesus Christ on the cross. Lu 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Stephen's final act for the nation of Israel. (See Heb. 6:6)

God's dealing with the nation of Israel was put away at that time. They rejected Christ. They rejected the crucified Christ.

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Stephen is important because he's the link between Peter and Paul. As you read the Book of the Acts, you notice the first part of this book has to do with the ministry of Peter to Jews. They refused. The last half of it has to do with the ministry of Paul to the Church. Stephen stands in between and, as the commission that the Lord Jesus gave the Church, that the Gospel should be preached in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth, Stephen is the connection between Jerusalem and Antioch, which became the headquarters of the Christian mission, from which the gospel went out to all the known world.

Chapter 8

Ac 8:1 And Saul (of Tarsus) was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

Saul of Tarsus never forget what he saw and heard that day. No; he never did. Paul said in Php 3:6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Then he said that he was the chief of sinners. 1Ti 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Stephen was slain for his faithful witness, but was his death a defeat? No, it was a victory because it was in the will of God. It is a victory to die in the will of God. Yes. Stephen died in victory; he was a faithful servant. What blessed hope did Stephen have, which we also have today? It is our translation resurrection at Jesus' return. It is the same hope that we enjoy when Jesus returns.

God uses persecution here to fulfill His will. He was spreading the gospel by scattering the believers throughout the region. The gospel was to go beyond Jerusalem. Acts 8: 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.

Lu 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Ac 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

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Ac 8:2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Although Israel's hope would seem dead there is still hope, because as a nation they will accept Christ after the fulfillment of the Gentiles. We have the living hope in Christ because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is seated at the right hand of God. We have the hope of a glorified body like unto His own and this is our hope that Jesus is coming for us soon. Then the Holy Spirit makes this real in our lives and sheds the love of God in our hearts. Ro 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Israel has no hope except in Jesus Christ, the risen Savior. They have rejected Christ but the nation of Israel will accept Christ after the fulfillment of the Gentiles. They want Benjamin, but they never accepted the Joseph, (Christ) the suffering one. Saul is now leading the persecution in Ac 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Saul as Paul later defends this way which he now persecuted. He was a pattern and the chief Apostle to those who believe hereafter. Paul really did have zeal for God when he was Saul. He did those things ignorantly in unbelief. See 1Ti 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Philip comes on the scene. Ac 8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. Ac 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Ac 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. There were three marvelous results which followed his preaching. Healings, miracles, unclean spirits were cast out, and the lame walked. Then there was great joy in that city. Ac 8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. Ac 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. We need to be filled with Holy Spirit.

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Jesus said that He must go so that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit would and lead and guide us up in the truth. The Holy Spirit is our teacher and without being filled, we cannot mature into full grown sons.

Peter and John sent from Jerusalem to Samaria that they might receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They needed to receive the Holy Spirit to receive power and to be an effective witness. Ac 8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: Simon the sorcerer was attracted to Philip's preaching. He saw the signs and wonders that Philip did and he wanted this power, but it was for his greed. His heart was not right. Philip preached Christ and Simon preached himself. Simon's preaching was from witchcraft and sorcery, but Philip preached Christ. Paul wrote in Ga 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This is legalism which is the same thing that Simon tried to do.

Simon wanted the Holy Spirit. He wanted to buy it with money. Ac 8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. His heart was not right. Ac 8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. He was baptized but he went into the water a sinner and came up a sinner. He sought to buy the blessings with money. Ac 8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. He was still a sinner. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Ac 8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. *** Simon did not have a repentant heart. He did not want to be punished. He did not want the consequences. He was still in bondage to the flesh through this sorcery. He was in the bond of iniquity.

Left off with V 24 Next time

Acts 9 Continued

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Paul had a great zeal as Saul of Tarsus for God, but it was harmful. Zeal without knowledge is harmful. Israel has a zeal for God but it is harmful without knowledge. They were ignorant of God's righteousness; so, being ignorant of God's righteousness, they established their own righteousness. Israel's self-righteousness was so important to them that they would not accept God. Jesus said in Mt 12:44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. **** This is a picture of Israel.

The house was swept but demons came in and took over the house which tells us of Israel. God cleaned Israel as He took them out of Egypt, through the wilderness. But these demons came along and took over the house and now they are worse than they were at the beginning. What were these demons that were worse? It was their self-righteousness and pride. It is harder to reach a person that is self-righteous than it is a sinner. Israel would not submit themselves to God's righteousness so they went on to establish their own self-righteousness. Paul as Saul thought he was doing God a service by persecuting Christians. (Zeal) Corresponds to Joh 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. This is what Paul was doing. He went to the high priest.

He wanted to get authority from the high priest to go to Damascus to the synagogues to find any of these in the (Christian) way. Ac 9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. He was hunting all those of the Christian way. In his zeal, he thought he was doing God a service. In Romans 10 it states that zeal without knowledge can be harmful. The high Priest authorized this mission. Paul as Saul asked permission of the high priest in the following verses. Ac 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest. 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

In this passage we have the most famous conversion story ever recorded. What must have been going through Paul's mind? What we see is that this is not so much a sudden conversion as a sudden surrender. Maybe something about Stephen must have lingered in Paul's mind and would not be removed. Maybe Paul thought, if Stephen was a bad man, how could he die like that? Paul persecuted the Christians in Jerusalem. This only made matters worse because once again he had to ask himself what was the secret that these simple people had. Paul was an intelligent man. What was it that made them face peril and sufferings and loss so calmly and unafraid. So, Paul went to the Sanhedrin. Paul had heard that certain of the Christians had escaped to Damascus and he asked for letters of credit that he might go to Damascus and extradite them. I am sure the journey only made matters worse.

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It was about 140 miles from Jerusalem to Damascus. The journey would be made on foot and would take some time to get there. Paul's only companions were the officers of the Sanhedrin, a kind of police force. As he walked, he much time to think, because there was nothing else to do. The way went through Galilee, and Galilee had to have brought Jesus even more vividly to Paul's mind. Think of the tension in his inner being. So, he came near Damascus, one of the oldest cities in the world. Just before Damascus the road climbed Mount Hermon and below lay Damascus, a lovely white city in a green plain. That region had this characteristic. When the hot air of the plain met the cold air of the mountain range, violent electrical storms resulted. Think of it, just at that moment came such a lightning storm and out of the storm Christ spoke to Paul. In that moment the long battle was over and Paul surrendered to Christ.

So, into Damascus he went a changed man. And how changed! He intended to enter Damascus in a punishing rage, but was led by the hand, blind and helpless. The Risen Christ said to Paul, Go into the city, and you will be told what to do. Up to this moment Paul had been doing what he liked, what he thought best, what his will dictated. From this time forward he would be told what to do. The Christian is a man who has **ceased to do what he wants to do** and he has begun to do **what Christ wants him to do**. The Lord Jesus met Saul. Ac 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Religious tradition is a terrible snare and we can trace its source in Jer 9:13 And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; 14 **But have walked after the imagination of their own heart**, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: 15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. At one time Saul accused Jesus of being an impostor, and portrayed Him as a blasphemer and injurious. It was because Jesus said He was the Son of God and died to redeem everyone, for all have sinned, even self-righteous Saul. Saul came the nearest of any man to saving himself by fulfilling the righteousness of the law but he could not do that.

He pursued perfection, and outwardly attained it, apart from the redemption of the only Perfect Man Christ Jesus. Meanwhile, he showed his heart rebellion against God by persecuting the people of God. This made him the chief of sinners. He did not apparently need God, or His righteousness. He appeared to be righteous, but that was only the old creation posing as reverent. It was not of faith. It was not based upon the redemption brought by Jesus Christ. There was no life, for the law could not and cannot give life (Galatians 3:21). Notice we see the Lord descending in glory, a light from heaven. And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: Israel will have a conversion similar to this. All of a sudden Jesus is going to reveal Himself from heaven to them. Paul as Saul is a type of the nation Israel in their blindness.

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Israel nationally rejected Christ, in this rejection Saul participated, and expressed it by holding Stephen's clothes while his enemies stoned him; Acts 7:58. Israel's blindness will be lifted as Saul's was on the road to Damascus. Ro 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.** 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: Paul was a picture of Israel and he was born ahead of the nation Israel. 1Cor 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. **** Paul here was talking about his conversion. He considered himself one born out of due time.

The word "due time" means a miscarriage or an untimely birth or a premature birth. Paul said that he was born prematurely or an untimely birth. Paul is talking about Saul standing right beside the cloths and watching as they stoned Stephen. He was standing right along with the nation Israel rejecting their Messiah. As the Lord was seen by Saul enroute for Damascus, so Jesus will be seen by His people Israel when Jesus is revealed from heaven. This is exactly Paul's meaning. His salvation by sovereign grace at the beginning of this age is an earnest of the salvation of his own race at the end. Rom 11:26. Jesus appearance to Paul is an example of His appearance to Israel; then also are His other appearances are typical of His final appearances to other saints.

Paul said, Ac 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. **** This also tells when he was saved. He was saved right then when He called Him Lord. Ac 9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. *****This an interesting verse which is typical of Israel at this time, they are blind during this church age. They are scattered among the nations. Ac 9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10 And there was a **certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias**; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Beyond doubt Ananias is one of the forgotten heroes of the Christian Church. Think of the brotherliness of Ananias. To Ananias came a message from God that he must go and help Paul; and he is directed to the street called "Straight." This was a great street that ran straight from the east to the west of Damascus. History says that it was divided into three parts, a center part where the traffic ran, and two side-walks where the pedestrians flocked and the merchant-men sat in their little booths and worked their trade. When that message came to Ananias it must have sounded crazy to him. He knew what Paul had been doing persecuting Christians. But no; his first words were, Brother Saul. What a welcome was that! It is one of the uplifting examples of Christian love. That is what Christ can produce in a Christians life. Get this! In Christ, Paul and Ananias, the men who had been the bitterest enemies, came together as brothers.

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**** Ananias means the grace of Jehovah or the grace of God. Only the grace of God opens blind eyes. The Lord gave Ananias the authority in a vision. Ac 9:10. Ac 9:11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, ****The house of Judas means to be praised and so, Christ is to be praised. Ac 9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 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: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

*** Here we see Paul's calling and the results of that calling from the Lord. He was a chosen vessel. #1 his calling was to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles. #2 and then kings and #3 the children of Israel. The results of that calling are in V16. Ac 9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. *****Suffering was the result of being obedient to God's calling. Paul wrote - 2Ti 3:10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. But out of them all, the Lord delivered me. Ac 9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

*** Here we see the results of that calling from the Lord. *****Then Paul says, 2Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Think of Israel, they will suffer more at their conversion than they ever have before. Ac 9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.***** Notice that Ananias called him brother Saul in V17 because Paul had been converted. He submitted to be baptized. Ac 9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.

Circumcision meant a complete cutting off from the world and the death of the old creation, so John the Baptist introduced water baptism as symbolic of death. Baptism into the Name of Jesus, meant a complete and eternal cutting off from all the past. He virtually said, I am no longer a Jew, but a disciple of Christ. Baptism in water, to a Jew, is the outward expression of death to Moses and of resurrection unto Christ. Paul's baptism was a sign and seal to his faith in Christ. After Jesus was seen of Stephen standing at God's right hand, as if ready to return to Israel, if they had received Him, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3; 12:2), because they rejected Him in rejecting Stephen. His sitting down was to continue two thousand years, which Hosea 6:2 terms as "two days." But for a special sovereign purpose, Jesus arose from His seat and appeared to persecuting Saul of Tarsus. Saul accepted Christ there and then, and was born again. Therefore, he was born two dispensational days, or two thousand years, ahead of the due time for the new birth of Israel as a nation. Compare Isaiah 66:8.

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Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. He preached Christ. Ac 9:20 and following are verses typical of what Israel will experience at their conversion. Between Ac 9:25-26, there is a three-year period between this. Ac 9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. 26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. This is Luke's account for he wrote the book of Acts. He wrote of what happened to Paul after his conversion. The chronology order we can also read Paul's own account of the matter in Galatians 1:15-24.

When we put the two accounts together, we find that the chain of events runs like this. (i) Saul is converted on the Damascus Road. (ii) He preaches in Damascus. (iii) He goes away to Arabia (Galatians 1:17). (iv) He returns and preaches in Damascus for a period of three years (Galatians 1:18). (v) He goes to Jerusalem. (vi) He escapes from Jerusalem to Caesarea. (vii) He returns to the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Galatians 1:21). So, we see that Paul began by doing two things. (i) He immediately bore Christ's witness in Damascus. In Damascus there were many Jews and consequently there would be many synagogues. It was in these Damascus synagogues that Paul first lifted up his voice for Christ. That was an act of the greatest moral courage. It was to these very synagogues that Paul had received his letters as an official agent of the Jewish faith and of the Sanhedrin council to destroy.

It would have been very much easier to begin his Christian witness somewhere where he was not known and where his past did not stand against him. Paul is saying, I am a changed man and I am determined that those who know me best should know it. Already he is proclaiming, **"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."** And he spoke boldly in the Name of the Lord Jesus. He wrote later to the Galatians 1:12, 15-16; For I neither received it (the Gospel) of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; but when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. *****This three-year period is referred to in Ga 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

Ga 1:16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen (Gentiles); immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.18 Then after **three years** I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. The Lord Jesus sovereignly revealed himself to Paul and he didn't go and talk it over with Peter or anyone to ask what they thought about all this. Jesus took Paul apart from the nation Israel to give him the message for the church. ***** It is interesting that the disciples didn't want anything to do with him. God was calling Paul to the Gentiles. Fear had gripped the disciple's heart. They were afraid of Paul. Ac 9:26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. Ac 9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

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For three years Paul worked and preached in Damascus and the Jews were so determined to kill him that they even set a guard on the gates lest he should escape them. But the ancient cities were walled cities and the walls were often wide enough for a chariot to be driven round the top of them. On these walls there were houses whose windows often projected over the walls. In the dead of night Paul was taken into one of these houses, let down with ropes in a basket and he was smuggled out of Damascus and set on his way to Jerusalem. Paul is only at the gateway of the Gospel for Christ but even here he is escaping with his life. **No one persecutes a man who is ineffective.** To suffer persecution is to be paid the greatest of compliments because it is the certain proof that men think we really matter.

Why did Saul emphasize the Divine Sonship of Jesus? Because that was the root- cause of the Jews' hatred of Him. His claim to being the Son of God, they termed blasphemy (John 5:18; 10:30-36). The Jews had scriptural ground for stoning Jesus if He were not God's Son (Leviticus 24:16). Therefore, they took the same bitter stand against Saul, seeking to kill Saul. We do not understand how the Jews could maintain such bitter hatred against the Son of God, but it simply shows the outcome of refusing to walk in the light. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. ***** Here they were telling Paul you better go back to your homeland in Tarsus and he stayed there a year or two and then v 31 occurs. Ac 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. This is typical of Christ's millennial reign.

In the natural we know why the churches had rest because Saul was taken out of the way as the persecutor. And the persecutor here is typical of the Christ rejecting Israel, that unregenerate heart. This speaks of the millennial rest that Israel will have at that time. The healing of Aeneas in v32 and the raising up of Tabitha in v40. Ac 9:32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. 34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. *** We now see Peter coming on the scene in his ministry to the nation Israel. Lydia means travail like a woman in travail at child birth. Also see Isa 66:8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

The nation of Israel will be the nation born in one day. They will accept Christ their Messiah. These verses have a local fulfillment but also a future fulfillment at the nation of Israel's conversion. And when they are converted Peter's message will go to them. **Aeneas means to praise or uttering praise.** Palsy is a paralysis of any voluntary muscles and a result of a disorder in the nervous system. So, we see Israel who was voluntarily sick because their rejection of Christ. It was a voluntary thing with them because they voluntarily rejected Christ. But Peter's message of Christ to the faithful remnant will make them whole just like Aeneas. Look at Ro 9:27 Esaias (Isaiah) also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: Ro 11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

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Ac 9:35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord. **** **Saron means rightness** which is a good place for Israel to dwell. Israel will accept Jesus Christ. Israel is set aside during the Church age; God's dealings with Israel and with the Church overlap in the beginning of this age. Yes, from the stoning of Stephen to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus throughout chapters 7,8, and 9, it is a transition to the Gentiles and the Church. Ac 9:36 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. **** She was full of good works. **Tabitha means a Gazelle** which is a small animal that is very swift, graceful, and it has large eyes. That is what God saw in Israel. But here we see Dorcas. Ac 9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. *** They sent for Peter to come.

Notice this speaks of Israel being set aside during the Church age; she was washed and laid in the upper chamber. This is Israel's condition during this age, the church age. Then Peter comes in v 39. Ac 9:39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, **Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes:** and when she saw Peter, she sat up. **Notice what they first bring to Peter, her good works, coats and garments that Dorcas made.**

Peter set all of these aside, it is **not by works** at all in V40. It is **only by the grace of God** and that is the message that Peter brought. Ac 9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. 43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.**** This resurrection of Tabitha is a foreshadow of Israel's resurrection. In Eze 37:1-7 we see the resurrection of the dry bones. Eze 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

Acts 9

Page 1

Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria. A question of our last study – Ac 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. In Jewish history, Jerusalem was the capital city of the Kingdom of Judah. (Judah 3,450 square miles). It is considered the heartland of the Jewish people. Samaria was the neighboring territory. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom for 160 years and was likely as large as Jerusalem during Hezekiah's time, at **around 150 acres**. It was the city on a hill. The city was well fortified with an outer wall that was about 20 ft tall and an inner wall that was about 5 ft thick.

It was also the name of the administrative district surrounding the city under later Greek and Roman administrations, referring to the mountainous region between the Sea of Galilee to the north and Judea to the south. The territory of Samaria was the central region of the biblical Land of Israel, today located in the northern West Bank. The territory of Samaria was about 40 miles from north to south and 35 miles from east to west. Throughout history, Jews lived in all these areas, with Jerusalem remaining a central point throughout. Jesus wanted a witness to proclaim the Gospel in the city where He was executed (Jerusalem).

But He also wanted the Good News to reach the land where His ministry was rejected (Judea), and he want the Gospel to go where the disciples felt out of place and looked down on the people (Samaria). Finally, He wanted the Gospel to go out to all people of the earth. **The 12 tribes of Israel were divided into two kingdoms** after the death of Solomon, around 975 B.C. The 12 sons of Jacob in order of their birth: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, **Judah**, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and **Benjamin**. **Ten of Jacob's sons became the 12 tribes of Israel.** The exception is Levi and Joseph: Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became the final two tribes. Joseph received a double portion of land, which went to his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Ge 48:3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine.

Levi was not given land. Levi's descendants, included Moses and Aaron. The Tribe of Levi was the tribe of the priesthood. De 18:1 The priests were the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. 2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

The Levites were chosen to serve God as priests, so they would not need to worry about providing for themselves. The Levites lived off the offerings and portions that were brought to the Lord, and they had no inheritance of land in Israel. (Deut 18). The Levites had a violent history. And what makes this interesting is that the violent nature of the Levites both (1) lost them land in Israel, and (2) gained them the priesthood. This is demonstrated in two episodes, that of Jacob's son Levi in Genesis 34 and that of the tribe of Levi in Exodus 32.

First, Levi (and his brother Simeon) slaughtered an entire city following the rape of his sister Dinah, which lost the Levites land in Canaan (Genesis 34:25-31).

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Second, the Levites slaughtered idolaters at Sinai following Israel's worship of the Golden Calf, which gained them the priesthood (Exodus 32:25-29).

After Jacob and his sons settled in the city of Shechem (Genesis 33:18), a man named Shechem, son of Hamor, raped Jacob's daughter Dinah (Genesis 34:1-2). Jacob's sons then deceived Shechem and Hamor by saying that they required the men of the city to be circumcised for Dinah's hand in marriage (Genesis 34:13-24). This provided an opportunity for Simeon and Levi to slaughter all the males, while all the brothers plundered the city (Genesis 34:25-29).

Though we may sympathize with Levi and Simeon's passion to protect their **sister's honor**, Jacob was not pleased and feared backlash among their neighbors (Genesis 34:30-31). So, when Jacob gave his blessing for his sons at the end of his life, he said this about Simeon and Levi:

Ge 49:5 Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. 6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. Simeon and Levi are brothers; and their weapons of violence were their swords. In his soul Jacob said, he would not come not into their council; He said, O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger, they killed men, and in their willfulness, they did this. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

The Kingdom of Judah – Two tribes

The southern kingdom, with its capital in Jerusalem, was made up of the tribe of Judah and most of the tribe of Benjamin.

The Kingdom of Israel – Ten tribes

The northern kingdom, with its capital in Samaria, was made up of the other 10 tribes and the remaining portion of the tribe of Benjamin. The northern kingdom was also known as Ephraim, the dominant tribe. The split was prophesied by the prophet Ahijah, who stated that the Lord would give ten of the tribes to Jeroboam to rule over. (1Kings 11).

Jerusalem and Judaea - Jerusalem is a city in the Judaeen Mountains, while Judaea is the historical name of the region surrounding Jerusalem: Jerusalem was the capital of the kingdom of Judah. Note: Bethlehem, is a town, situated in the Judaeen Hills 5 miles south of Jerusalem. After King Solomon's death, the kingdom split into a northern kingdom, which retained the name Israel, and a southern kingdom was called Judah. (I Kings 12). This division continues to this day, and they will not be reunited until Jesus comes and establishes His Kingdom (Isaiah 11:12-13; Ezekiel 37:15, 28).

Now, when the Holy Spirit came from heaven, (day of Pentecost). He came as the fulfillment of God's promise to the whole house of Israel (Acts 2:36); but Israel was not all represented in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was poured out. As Jerusalem was the capital of the kingdom of Judah, they received the Holy Spirit. Israel, or the ten tribes, whose capital was in Samaria, must also nationally be visited by the Holy Spirit. And since "the keys of the kingdom" were committed to Peter (Matthew 16:19), it was officially proper that he should introduce them to Holy Spirit to the ten tribes in Samaria as well as to the two tribes in Jerusalem which happened on the day of Pentecost.

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Ac 8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: Why was the Holy Spirit not poured out upon the city of Samaria until about seven years after the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 in Jerusalem? This is an important question. The ten tribes were the first to depart from the Lord, and they will be the last of the whole of Israel to return to Him. When Jesus comes back, He will begin dealing with the two tribes first, (Judah) and they will be the first to receive Him – “A remnant shall be saved” (Ro 9:2); then later the ten tribes will receive Him: “So all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26). The Lord’s dealings with the Jews through the apostles and with the ten tribes through Philip and the apostles at the beginning of this church age, was an example of His final treatment of them. And yet, individuals from the ten tribes were with the Jews at the beginning (See Chapter 2:22; 4:10).

Chapter 9

Ac 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. **** There are two accounts of Saul’s conversion in the book of Acts and this is the start of the first one. The name Saul means requested. Paul means little or small. When we yield to God, we become little. Note: Saul began moving out of the city of Jerusalem to other nearby regions. Notice that the persecution taking place was with the authority of the law givers and administrators. Wow, this is happening now? Law givers and judges in America are making so many decisions that violate the Truth of the Word of God.

What we see here in this chapter was the persecution that really is upon us from different sides. Saul/Paul in this verse teaches us that Christians are not at odds with flesh and blood. However, Paul reveals to us that we are at war. Eph 6:12 For we wrestle **not against** flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. We have an enemy with-out and with-in. Satan comes at us through the flesh with-in. This is the fleshly nature that old nature which we battle every day. There are as well, hidden unseen spiritual forces and the evil invisible rulers of this present world that rule the kingdom of darkness. The word of truth is more important as we continue to learn how we should react to these attacks. How do we do that? Where does Satan attack us?

2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 **Casting down imaginations**, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought** to the obedience of Christ; The spiritual weapons are mostly defensive. They are mighty through God. God is in them; God is with those who use them. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, the arrows of truth which pierce the consciences of men, the weapon of all prayer, the influence of the Holy Ghost; that is divine power. Such weapons as these are by God’s power made mighty to overthrow spiritual powers that come against us.

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First, we must “cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God”; we must demolish these fortresses. (more than one) Then, secondly, “bringing into captivity every thought”; I will call this prisoners seized. Then thirdly, prisoners led away captive; “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” The captured ones are taken away and we have our new service to the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were tempted by a serpent to eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Where did that temptation hit them first? The mind! Then Cain slew his brother Abel. Cain represents those who serve God in accordance to the **imaginations of their own heart** instead of in ways authorized by God.

Little thoughts come in, but we must do battle against those negative ones: Col 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Ps 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: Mt 9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? ***This is where these thoughts will lead us. Peter in Lu 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (converted means to turn one’s self about). Peter strengthened his brethren when he preached those sermons in Acts. But before that; Peter had to learn about how these little thoughts attack his mind.

Joh 21:20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, **what is that to thee? follow thou me.** Peter was already letting his mind get the best of him. It starts with us with a thought about someone or something. Maybe they aren’t paying attention to us like they should. Then our mind dwells on that and the enemy is right there to push our buttons. What about Noah’s fall? He thought that his vineyard that he grew was so wonderful instead of seeing who created that vineyard. It started in his thoughts. In these studies, the last few weeks we have learned about the battles many faced. And where is the battle? The mind. There is no way we can battle if we do not make the Gospel practical in our lives. We surely have learned in this study that we must make this Gospel practical in our lives. We can’t just throw our hands up and do nothing.

Heb 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the **full assurance of hope** unto the end: **Full assurance of hope** means the full complement of the word of God. This is the same thing as Paul said in 1Ti 6:12 **Fight** the good fight of faith, **lay hold on eternal life**, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. You have a fight on your hands and in order to lay hold on eternal life, we are going to have fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life until it is complete. Diligence means eagerness, care, earnestness, and make haste. Does that sound like we don’t have to apply the word of God? That teaching is robbing people of becoming a full overcomer. The battles come at us and we need to know how to battle in a practical way. We must be taught. That is why the Lord allows these things to come at us. Now this does not mean we have to do works.

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The Lord wants to sanctify us. That means He wants to set us apart for Him. Jesus prayed in, Joh 17:17 **Sanctify (set them apart)** them through thy truth: thy word is truth. Joh 17:19 And for their sakes **I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.** Jesus knew these battles of the mind would come upon us. He is praying for us that we fail not, even if Satan has asked to sift us as wheat. This is the labor? Heb 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 **Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest,** lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We do not and we cannot work for our salvation. **The word labour here means study; be diligent.**

It is the same word as study in 2Ti 2:15 **Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. We do not work to try to get something from God. The labor is in our own house of this fleshly body. Paul said in 1Co 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into **subjection**: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (castaway means unapproved). **Subjection** to what? This word! That is what we use as our weapon when these thoughts and trials come at us. This is the labor when these thoughts come into our minds and the enemy puts his magnifying glass on them and makes them bigger than what they really are. These small thoughts turn into bigger and bigger until a greater sin enters in.

Everything that comes at us; thoughts, sickness, finances, whatever; it all comes through the hand of God. Satan cannot get at us unless God allow it. So, when these things happen, will we complain or murmur; or will we stop for a moment and turn to the Lord and say, Lord you brought this my way, whatever it is, how can I make this to glorify you and learn from it. That is not easy. But if we just swallow every bad thought or the things that so easily beset us (unbelief) swallow it hook line and sinker; every bad thought and complain about our circumstances, what are we really doing? Cain's sin was really against God. Everything and every circumstance and every person in our path in this life right now, the Lord, put it there. Why? Ro 8:29 to be conformed to the image of his Son. Remember Levi: Nu 3:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. 7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.

The Levites were to keep guard over the whole congregation, as they minister at the tabernacle. They were to guard all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and keep guard over the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. Remember, Levi and Simeon's passion was to protect their **sister's honor.** **The Levites'** are representative of the priests and their inheritance **was God** Himself. They were the ones chosen to oversee the worship of the entire nation of Israel. Now they were chosen to **honor** God. 1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Today the believer is a priest, and it means that our entire life is devoted to the worship of God.

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The Levites were under authority. They submitted to God's order and His authority. They were assigned their place and we are too. What's your place, a father, mother, brother, sister etc. The Levites excelled and were skillful. Their fight was **mostly defensive** and so is ours. Refer to Eph 6:12-18. The Levites were not just priests, they were warrior-priests. God put the violent nature of the Levites to good use. Not only would the priests among them slaughter animals on a regular basis for sacrifice, but also all the Levites would guard the tabernacle/temple and the cities of refuge. Are we not to guard the things of God and treasure them. All of this points to Christ, the true Warrior-Priest, who not only became a sacrifice for sin, but who guards God's temple of worship.

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God. We too must join Jesus in guarding God's glory and honor. We are defending the honor of God by bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. I think the greatest labor is within ourselves. I am my greatest problem in a sense. It is the battle within and without that we come in contact with every day of our lives. It is not easy to go through the sanctifying process of being conformed to the image of Christ, and be set apart, and be made holy full of the Holy Spirit. If we give ourselves wholly unto God in every detail of our lives, I know on the surety of God's word that we will not be disappointed.

There are seven advantages of which Paul could boast. (Phil. 3:5, 6). Php 3:5 (1)Circumcised the eighth day, of (2) the stock of Israel, of (3) the tribe of Benjamin, an (4) Hebrew of the Hebrews; as (5) touching the law, a Pharisee; (6) Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; (7)touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Then all of these things of the flesh Paul counted loss. Php 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Then in Romans 10 Paul writes about zeal. Ro 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Paul was a man that had everything in the natural, but he gave it all up. Why? To be set apart, and made holy full of the Holy Spirit and to give us this Gospel. If it is possible for a man that persecuted and was the chief of sinners, than this is possible for you and me.

Acts 10 and 11 Nov 14, 2024

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Ac 10:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, (**battalion**) 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. **** Cornelius means being full or satisfied with the things of God. God is interested in people that want to be soaked or filled with God. Remember who is here, Philip and no doubt Cornelius has heard Philip preaching the Gospel.

The date of the events of this chapter was about 41 A.D., or eight years after the Holy Spirit fell on the 120 in the upper room in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit in Cornelius's house was only an example of His world-wide out-pouring which will come after Israel receives the Lord Jesus Christ in the age to come. They will then proclaim Him all over the world. The phrase, **a certain man**, is interesting. The word certain occurs about 50 times in this book. God has certain times for the accomplishments of certain ordained purposes. Keep in mind, that there is nothing haphazard with His plans. He orders our footsteps. Cornelius was being prepared beforehand for that day and purpose. Therefore, he was not ignorant of the truth concerning Jesus. The brief history of his devotion in verse two is truly interesting. Hungry hearts find the Lord, and the loving Lord finds folks who will take the truth. Note the different means employed by the Lord to make His will known.

God used an angel, a vision, the Word, a man, and the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is not a proof of knowing everything. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, wrought great miracles, and was the chief of the 12 apostles; yet he did not know until that day that salvation was for the Gentiles, although he had declared it before. (See chapter 2:17, 39; 3:26) By the Spirit, men often say more than they know, but when we are teachable and pliable to the Holy Spirit, God can show us the truth. Ac 10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

For the first time Cornelius a Gentile is to be admitted into its fellowship. Cornelius was a Roman centurion stationed at Caesarea, the headquarters of the government of Palestine. The word which we have translated **battalion** is the Greek word for a cohort. In the Roman military there was first the legion. It was a force of six thousand men and therefore was roughly equal to a division. In every legion there were **ten cohorts**. A cohort therefore had six hundred men and comes near to being the equivalent of a battalion. The cohort was divided into centuries and over each century there was a centurion. The century is therefore roughly the equivalent of a company. The parallel to the centurion in our military organization is a company sergeant-major. These centurions were the backbone of the Roman army. History describes the qualifications of the centurion like this: Centurions are not to be overbold and reckless but they must be good leaders.

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Steady and wise minded, not prone to take the offensive to start fighting needlessly, but able when overwhelmed and hard-pressed to stand fast and die at their posts. Cornelius therefore was a man who first and foremost knew what courage and loyalty were. Before Cornelius could be welcomed into the Church, Peter had to learn a lesson. Strict Jews believed that God had no use for the Gentiles. Sometimes they even went the length of saying that help must not be given to a Gentile woman in childbirth, because that would only be to bring another Gentile into the world. Peter had to unlearn that before Cornelius could get in.

Ac 10:9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a **great sheet** knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

Peter was already on the way to unlearning some of the things he had been brought up with. He was staying with a man called Simon who was a tanner. A tanner worked with the dead bodies of animals and therefore he was permanently unclean (according to Numbers 19:11-13). No strict Jew would have dreamed of accepting hospitality from a tanner. It was his uncleanness that made it necessary for Simon to dwell on the sea-shore outside the city. No doubt this tanner was a Christian and Peter had begun to see that in Christianity these laws were abolished. The sheet with the animals on it appeared to him and the voice told him to kill and eat. Now the Jews had strict food laws, recorded in Leviticus 11:1-47. The Jew ate only animals which chewed the cud and whose hoofs were cloven. All others were unclean and forbidden. Peter was shocked and protested that he had never eaten anything that was unclean. The voice told him not to call what God had cleansed unclean.

This happened three times so that there could be no possible mistake or dodging of the lesson. Once Peter would have called a Gentile unclean; but now God has prepared him for the Gentiles who would come into the household and the family of God. Note: The **new creation** came up from the grave in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it also comes down from heaven. All who believe are born from above. God hath concluded all under sin, all in unbelief (Jews and Gentiles, or as wild beasts, creeping things, etc.), that He might have mercy upon all, or provisionally cleanse them, and actually cleanse them that believe on Jesus (Romans 11:32; Galatians 3:22). This truth of God's gracious sovereign provision and offer of salvation should grip our hearts. God granted repentance unto life to Jews and Gentiles. Once for all, Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Hebrews 9:26). All men are clean provisionally, the moment they believe on Jesus Christ. Note: the voice (of the Holy Spirit) said the second time to Peter, Acts 10:15 What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

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Ac 10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. 21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

On the next day Peter rose and went with them and they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and invited along his kinsmen and his closest friends. Note: the really strict Jew would have no contact with a Gentile. The Jew would never have as a guest nor ever be the guest of a man who did not observe the Law or a Gentile. When Peter arrived at Caesarea, Cornelius met him at the door, no doubt wondering if Peter would cross his threshold at all, and Peter came in. In the most amazing way, the barriers are beginning to come down. V25 When Peter was going to come in Cornelius met him and fell at his feet and worshipped him. Peter raised him up and said, "Rise; I, too, am a man. V27 Peter found many who had assembled there and began to preach. Ac 10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. So, I came without any objection when you sent for me. V30 So Cornelius said, Four days ago from this time, I was praying in my house at three o'clock in the afternoon, and, a man stood before me in shining clothes and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your deeds of charity have been remembered before God.

Send therefore to Joppa and send for Simon who is also called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, on the sea-shore. Immediately I sent to you; and I am most grateful that you have come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Ac 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; He preached peace and healing through Jesus Christ. Jesus crucified, buried, raised, and the coming Judge, and remission of sins for those who believe. Note verse 43: To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. Ac 10:44-46 While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

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And they of the circumcision (Jews) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the Gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. The Holy Spirit always accompanies the preaching of the Christ in His fulness. That was, of course, the **official arrival of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles** as was His arrival to the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2:4). Note: Three men, Shem, Ham, and Japheth peopled the earth after the flood. And three saved men were used to begin the **peopling of the earth with the new creation**. They were the Eunuch of Ethiopia, a Hamite (Ac 8:27), Saul, a Shemite (Ac 9), and Cornelius, a Japhite (Ac10).

Chapter 11

Ac 11:2-3 When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest into men uncircumcised and didst eat with them. People, even believers, are slow to receive the truth. There is something in our make-up that practically says: What I have not experienced, or seen, is not to be experienced or seen. Repentance unto life is a Divine gift. Salvation is a gracious gift from God. No one would, nor could ever receive the Lord Jesus had not Jesus appeased the just anger of an offended God, by His own sacrificial death on the cross. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit enables men to repent and believe. By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). Ac 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

The remaining verses of this chapter are interesting and comprehensive. The hidden purposes in the Holy Spirit's workings is a wonder. God is bringing one thing to a close, and meanwhile paving the way for another. In His wonderful wisdom, God is planning for a special ministry to a special man with a special message. It is to the Apostle Paul. Those scattered abroad were supposed to preach to the Jews only, some of them were from Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spoke unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus (Ac 11:20). Why? Because the Holy Spirit was directing them and the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord (Ac 11:21). Therefore, an assembly has begun by those whom Saul had persecuted. **Get this!** Afterward it became the glorious center for His Spirit filled operations. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas there, who later became Paul's first associate. Barnabas said, V 23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. Why was he like that? V24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

What was the result? And much people was added unto the Lord. God surely had a hand in directing Barnabas: V25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul. Note: There have been three steps that we see here. First, Philip preached to the Samaritans; but the Samaritans after all were half Jewish and formed, a bridge, between the Jewish and the Gentile world. Second, Peter accepted Cornelius; but it was Cornelius who took the initiative. It was not the Christian Church who sought Cornelius; it was Cornelius who sought the Christian Church. Third, in Antioch the Church did not go to people who were Jews or wait to be approached by Gentiles, it preached the gospel to the Gentiles and Jews alike. Christianity is finally launched on its world-wide mission to Jews and Gentiles.

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Ac 11:22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. **** Now we begin to see things shift. We see the first church in Antioch and God has new order of things. He is dealing with the church, Jew and Gentile. If they had stayed at Jerusalem, they would have been just another sect of Judaism, like the Pharisees or Sadducees. The word **Antioch means** driven again. **Barnabas means** son of consolation. Barnabas is from the isle of Cyprus. Ac 11:25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were **called Christians first in Antioch**. Now we see here Jew and Gentile are Christians. What a beautiful name Christian. And here we see God bringing on a new leader, the Chief Apostle Paul. He has been in training and now he is on the scene. It is very interesting that the Holy Spirit brings them here and were here a year teaching these Christians at Antioch.

Look at Ephesian concerning the gospel given to Paul. Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: ***** Dispensation of the grace of God means a period of time which we are in today. Paul was given this gospel for the Church age. Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) **** What is a mystery? A mystery is something that we don't understand. Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; **** The Holy Spirit reveals that mystery to all that want to know it today. **And what is that mystery? V6 gives us the answer.** 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. **** The mystery **was not** revealed in ages past, Peter didn't know it. He gave Peter a special vision of it in Acts 10 and 11 but now Paul is coming on the scene to teach and to give us that mystery. And Paul is still doing that today because we still have his letters in the form of the epistles of Paul in the New Testament. We have 13 Epistles that Paul wrote plus the book of Hebrews.

Observe this: Paul was raised up by God, independent of the other apostles, and given a revelation of the calling and heavenly portion of the Church which the kingdom apostles did not know. And this was some time after the Jerusalem assembly was in existence. They do not seem to have entered into the fulness and liberty of the Gospel as preached by the Apostle Paul. We will see this emphasized in Acts, chapter 15. There we read that they sent chosen men, warriors of their own company, to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, to confirm and strengthen the believers there. It is Paul's writings alone which give as the scope and fulness of the heavenlies, in which he affirms, God "raised us up together with Christ and made us sit together with Him" - Eph. 2:6. The book of Joshua answers to the Ephesian epistle. And as all of the Church in the beginning did not enter into, nor desire to possess this heavenly land, so in like manner is the situation before our eyes today. And so has it been all down this present age. Many thru ignorance, others thru unbelief, have refused the privilege and therefore lose the better things. **The majority are not willing to pay the price, for this upward calling costs us something.**

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When we actually put our feet upon the heavenly land, in other words, realize by faith our oneness with Christ, the devil resists us with all his principalities and powers in the heavenlies; for this is the place of his throne. He stirs up the world against us and we are rejected and despised of men, even as was our adorable Lord. The world will not run after us. No indeed! We will be “counted as sheep for the slaughter.” We will not have any great, wonderful revivals, such as whole cities turning to Christ: rather our ministry will be unappreciated, as was Paul’s; for he writes that, “even unto this present hour, . . we are made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things” - I Cor. 6:11. He was thankful to escape from some cities in a most humiliating way; in others, he was beaten, imprisoned and “cast out as dead” - Acts 14:19. But God, his life and his strength, was at hand. The Lord came in and delivered him, generally by apparently natural means, but none the less miraculous. And He does the very same for us today when we are going in the way that Paul, the pattern saint, traveled, There is grace abundant grace!

For next Tuesday night, the Lord has been speaking to me about Ge 12:3and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. I will go into the covenants and the land of Canaan. What is our part? The Lord gave me this title of the message. Stopping short of Canaan. I believe I need to address this before we go on in Genesis and it will lay a foundation of where we are heading in Acts as well. It is so foundational for us and the Lord has really impressed this on my heart.

Ac 11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. *** Agabus means grasshopper. He was a prophet. Agabus prophesied of a dearth that occurred during this time. It is also a prophesy of the Tribulation period. It will most severe in Israel. There will be relief in those days for the people of God. Mt 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Ac 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: They did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. This great famine was due to the fact that Israel, as a nation, had rejected the Son of God and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The phrase, all the world, means all the inhabited earth. That, too, was typical of the trial, world-wide, from which the full overcomers shall be delivered at the close of this age (Revelation 3:10). Thank God! After Jesus comes and Israel receives Him, there will be no more dearth, but abounding plenty. See Joel 2:19-27.

Acts 12 -13

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Chapter 12 really closes the account of the 12 Apostles. Ac 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.² And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. ³ And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) ****Why did Herod persecute the Christians. Herod saw that it pleased the Jews. Today we see the religious world and the national world against Christ. It was both that united that put Christ to death. It was the feast of Passover in Jerusalem at that time. The king really guarded Peter. He might have heard about Peter's escape out of prison before in earlier chapters. But he puts 16 soldiers to guard Peter. 4x4 which 4 is the number of the earth and they are multiplied against the gospel. They would bind the gospel and keep it in prison and that is what Peter represents. Herod killed James, which signifies those of the tribulation that will be martyred during the tribulation who will refuse to take the mark of the beast.

Ac 12:4 And when he had apprehended him, (Peter) he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. ⁵ Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. ⁶ And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. ⁷ And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. ***The light of revelation.**** Peter in prison is a picture of his message which is the gospel of the kingdom and that message has been in prison for over 2,000 years, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. How true that is today that we are praying for Israel and for that day when they will receive the message. Prayer of the Church was made without ceasing for him unto God. Ac 12:11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. **** The expectation was that they were going to kill Peter. Peter realized that he was not dreaming and the Lord sent an angel to deliver him. Herod is a type of the antichrist.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him; his chains fell off from his hands; he said follow me; the iron gate opened to them on his own accord; he was delivered out of the hand of Herod.

Ac 12:8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. ⁹ And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

¹⁰ When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.¹¹ And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. Ac 12:12 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 praying. This was the mother of John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.

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Peter calls John Mark his son in 1Pe 5:13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. This meaning is he is his spiritual son. See the reaction when Peter appeared at the house where they were praying. They said, It is his angel. They were astonished. Ac 12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. They were praying in believing and they said in Ac 12:15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. V 14 is a **picture that they will hear his message before they see his face**. Ac 12:14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

Ac 12:17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. This James is the son of Alphaeus, the pastor of Jerusalem. He is called the Lord's brother in Gal 1:19 and he wrote the book of James. **** Again, Herod figures the antichrist. Ac 12:21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. ***** This is the typical view of the destruction of the anti-Christ. After the antichrist is dead and he is judged, in the millennium the word of God will grow and be multiplied. Ac 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Chapter 13

This chapter to the end of the book of Acts starts the ministry of Paul. It has been about five years since the apostle Paul has been converted. It has been 12 years since Pentecost. It is about AD 44 or 45. We see that Antioch is the center of activity which is in Turkey. Ac 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ** Here we see the church apostles which are Barnabas and Paul. Where had Saul been these years? Saul was 5 years in training. Ga 1:17 neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. *** He was in Damascus and then the back side of the desert of Arabia. Then he went back to Damascus for about three years, then Jerusalem and then he went back to Tarsus and then Antioch which took up about five years. Ac 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Ac 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. ***** As people were busy ministering to the Lord and fasting and worshipping God, The Holy Ghost began to move and Paul receives his commission.

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Ac 13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. ****Cyprus was devoted to the goddess Venus. Cyprus is an Island off the coast of Israel. This is where Barnabas home town is. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. **** Salamis is the first port on the island of Cyprus. 6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: ***** Here on Paul's first missionary journey goes to the Jew, to the synagogue, yet he is called to the Gentile. The gospel had to go first to the Jew and then the Gentile. It was offered to the Jew first. It was always this way and it was up to each Jew to receive it. Paphos is just another city on this Isle of Cyprus. The meaning of the name Cyprus is love or a blossom. To receive the gospel is love. Seleucia means a white light. Salamis means a surging such as the surging waters which cause us problems. 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. This Sergius Paulus was a prudent man and he had authority because it says he was a deputy on the Island of Cyprus. Sergius Paulus name means earth born. We were all born of Adam and we are God's creatures. We were born of wonder. See how wonderful God created us. This is just what these Christ rejecters do, they come along like Elymus and try to turn away Sergius Paulus from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. This begins Paul's first missionary journey. Paul goes on three missionary journeys in the book of Acts and this is his first one. 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? ***No, they will not. Saul is now called Paul from here on out. We do read of Barnabas and Saul, but of Paul and Barnabas. * Paul calls him a child of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness. They do seek to pervert the right ways of the Lord.

Ac 13:11 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. ***This goes right along with Ro 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Notice in V11 it is not a total blindness; not seeing the sun for a season; and that season for Israel will be about 2,000 years long. They will not see the gospel light. No matter what people do, Israel as a nation will not be converted as a nation until they are brought down on the road of Damascus just like the Apostle Paul and the Lord will reveal Himself to them. **If men today reject Paul's gospel, what comes upon them? Spiritual blindness.** Ga 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be **accursed**. Elymus means wise learned, a magician. It speaks to the wisdom of this world; it is what the world learns. We find that the deep things of God are revealed unto us by His Holy Spirit. We gain wisdom by Christ, and it is by revelation revealed unto us by the Holy Spirit. Tares never become wheat nor does wheat become tares. Paphos means suffering. It is the second seaport of the gospel visit. This is where they meet a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, and he is a Jew. His name is Barjesus which means son of Jesus or son of the savior. He is typical of Israel. He has a wonderful name but he was not true to that name.

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Because in his walk he was Elymas the sorcerers. In his walk and his life; he was not true to his name just like Israel. Paul writes in Ga 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, it was Elymas the sorcerers. It was those Christ rejecting Jews that come down and follow Paul throughout his missionary journeys. There is always an Elymus the sorcerers in type that follow Paul right along. Jesus said this of the self-righteous Jews who resisted the Truth in John 8:44. Jesus referred to the Pharisees as you are of your father the devil. Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Ac 13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. ***** This doctrine of the Lord is the message of grace. Ac 13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem. ****Perga means earthy. It is where the gospel went and all men were earthly minded. We don't have a recorded message of Paul here. Ac 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. ***** This is a different Antioch. Ac 13:15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. *** We see the Holy Spirit working here again.

Paul preached to the Jew first and then the Gentiles. Men of Israel and ye that fear God. Ac 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. Ac 13:17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high **arm brought he them out of it.** *** Paul introduced this wonderful gospel to his people, the Jews as: **the God of this people of Israel**, the God of the Old Testament. God chose Himself a people of Israel, separating them from the world (Egypt) for His purpose. He endured their fleshly manners, **yet God caused them to overcome and lay hold of their inheritance.** He gave them a king (David), a man after God's own heart. This brief history is found in Acts 13:17-22. This was also taken from Ps 89:20 *** God was the God of Israel because He is the God of Israel. He chose our fathers and exalted the people. God led His children out of the land of Egypt. **God endured their awful sinful habits. God also prepared their inheritance in the land of Canaan.** God was faithful to Israel to be their chief and authority. **God didn't desire that Israel would take King Saul but Israel wanted to be like the other nations.** They would rather have a king so God gave them a king. Saul failed and God raised up David to be their king.

Spiritual Canaan is an inheritance so broad, and wide, and lasting; why do we not hurry to take it? There is holiness, do we not want it? There is calmness, do we not desire it? There is joy unspeakable and full of glory, do we not wish for it? There is usefulness, do we not hunger for it? Our inheritance is Christ, and he resides. But the Canaanite was there! Yes, I know it; but you see he had no right there: the Lord had outlawed him. It is time that we took possession of that goodly heritage which the Lord has made our own, for it is in Christ Jesus "we have obtained an inheritance," and have the earnest of it in our possession by the Spirit of God. We come to live with Christ, in Christ, for Christ, as Christ: we rise in him to fellowship with Him.

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Are we not to be settled in Immanuel's land. Notice that there are three leading words in Joshua 1:11 "prepare," "pass over," "possess." "Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land." They were to prepare, not manna, for that would not keep above a day. We must get good meals of spiritual meat, the kind of meat which will sustain us. Feed much on the love of God, and the glorious truths which are laid up in Christ Jesus. Care nothing for human thought and carnal eloquence, but take to the solid meat, which is to be our nourishment when we dwell in the presence of God forever. I wish that professing Christians were more cautious about what they feed on. Some sermons are satisfied, with whatever. They do not care what the doctrine may be. If it is from a clever man who gratifies their ear. Some people can eat sawdust and make a meal of shadows. God's people are feeding on deadly things of man's thoughts. But we must, feed on Christ, feed on spiritual food, feed on the pure truth of God's Word, and feed our souls on nothing else. Know the taste of what we eat, and let it be as clear and definite as that of butter and honey, that so we may readily refuse the evil and choose the good. We must know the difference in the spiritual food that is placed before us.

Ac 13:17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of **forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.** 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, **he divided their land to them by lot.** 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. God gave testimony and said; Ac 13:22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. He was a man after God's own heart. He never argued with God's judgment. He had a wonderful heart attitude. We read of the Davidic Covenant in Psalm 89:20 2Sam 7 the whole chapter. Ac 13:23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus: *** This is the seed of David. Ac 13:24 When (John the Baptist) John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Paul introduces Jesus at the beginning of His ministry.

It is called the word of salvation, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ in V26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is **the word of this salvation** sent. **** The glory of this ministry was not in repentance, but repentance was a step in God's work in our hearts. It is as God works repentance in our hearts then this works in our hearts to bring us to Christ. The rulers ignorantly fulfilled their own scriptures in verse 27. He says here in v 27 that the religious leader, as Peter says, the master builders the craftsman; they rejected the chief corner stone. Here Paul says the rulers that dwell at Jerusalem, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets. They did not recognize the Messiah when He came.

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Because of their rejection, they crucified Jesus and fulfilled all that was written of Him. Even in their rejection and crucifixion they fulfilled the scriptures. But God raised Him from the dead.

Ac 13:27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28 And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulcher. 30 But God raised Him from the dead: V 30 is the evidence that Jesus was their promised Messiah.

Ac 13:31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, (Glad tidings speaks of the Gospel) how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (This is speaking of the resurrection of Christ not His birth. This day is the day of resurrection) This is what Paul is speaking about here, the resurrection, the proof of Jesus sonship. There are three prophecies (given in this chapter) which were fulfilled in His resurrection. Ps 2:7 Ps 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.** Isa 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, **even the sure mercies of David.** Ps 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither **wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.** 11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. David prophesied Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. David did not talk about himself because David is dead and saw corruption, his body is decayed. David was prophesying of Christ. So, Paul use three prophecies that were given and they were all fulfilled in Christ Jesus as proof of who Christ was. Ac 13:34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

Ac 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the **forgiveness of sins**: 39 And by him all that believe are **justified from all things**, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. **** Here we see the forgiveness of sin and to be justified is now offered to the people on the basis of God's grace. This is the marvelous offer of grace to them by believing on this Jesus. The difference between "forgiveness of sins" and "justification from sin." God was the offended party and he can forgive an offense yet the offender would still be an offender to God, but God went far greater than that. He not only forgave us our sins, but He justified us. He rendered unto us innocence. It is just as if we had never sinned. The record is wiped clean; our sins are gone. Ro 8:33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. This is only possible in the realm of grace.

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That is why he says here; 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. It is only by God's grace could we be justified. No man could be justified by the law. There was nothing wrong with the law, but it was weak through the flesh. The flesh could not keep it. Ro 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: What is our responsibility in all of this? It just to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and God counts it to us for righteousness. Ac 13:40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. *** Paul was warning us here. V41 is quoted from Hab 1:5.

God did this wonderful work in their day, but they despised it; and the word despise means to threat or think scorn with contempt. They rejected Christ Jesus and God's grace then they are the ones that despise and they will perish. Compare this with Heb 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? Those that reject Christ Jesus reject God's grace and His offering of Jesus Christ and they will perish. Paul here was declaring grace to them here so that no would perish, but they would not heed to his words.

Ac 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. *** Now when they broke up in the synagogue, the Gentiles were hungry for this message of forgiveness and justification, which is the message of God's grace. Paul and Barnabas preached and persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. It isn't that we are saved by grace and then kept by our own good conduct, but Paul persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. Col 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, **so walk ye in him**: And how did we receive Christ Jesus? By simple faith; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gentiles received this message of glad tidings. Ac 13:44 And the next sabbath day almost the **whole city came together to hear the word of God.***** How the word does travel!

Ac 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.**** Remember Elymus in the preceding chapter which is a picture of the Christ rejecting Jews. They follow Paul around trying to turn away those from God and the faith. They hardened their hearts and always cause trouble. They hardened their hearts against the Gentiles. Ac 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, **lo, we turn to the Gentiles.** 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

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*** Paul says here, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, referring to the Jews; it was to the Jew first and then the Gentiles, but the Jew refused it. **The Jews judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life.** It was their decision that they judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life. God views them this way. This is from God's viewpoint. Because of that Paul says, we turn to the Gentiles. Everywhere Paul goes he preaches to the Jew first and then the Gentile.

Ac 13:47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. *** This is taken from Isaiah 49:6 and there in Isaiah it does refer to Jesus Christ. Jesus was the light unto the Gentiles. And the Apostle Paul was also fulfilling his calling because he was an Apostle unto the Gentiles and was a light. He was letting that light shine. This was a prophesy of Christ, He is the light unto the Gentiles, but it also speaks of Paul who was the Apostle to the Gentiles who was letting his light shine. Paul was called to be an Apostle to the Gentiles and he was letting his light shine unto the Gentiles. It was the gospel light that he shined unto the Gentiles. The heart attitude **today** of the Gentiles is becoming as indifferent as the Jews were then. Ac 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. *** Today men **either accept or reject** the Lord Jesus and this gospel. By listening to the word men align themselves unto eternal life.

Ac 13:49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost. ***** This interesting because Jesus said in Mr 6:11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. We are only responsible to share the gospel, it is the hearer's responsibility to hear or not.

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Ac 14:1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. Although Paul had said in the preceding chapter, Lo, we turn to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit led Paul and Barnabas to go to the Jews first when they came to Iconium. Note also to the Jew first and then to the Gentile as the Holy Spirit led in Acts 13:46. This is God's order. Ac 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. The persecution seemed to fire them up to proclaim the truth of the gospel even more. They spoke boldly in the name of the Lord. Ac 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. When the word of grace is preached and going out, it will always bring witness and results in people's lives. He did it by granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. The Lord always gives testimony unto the Word of His grace.

History of Iconium: It is about 90 miles from Antioch. It was a city so ancient that it claimed to be older than Damascus. What was proposed in Iconium was nothing other than a lynching for Paul and Barnabas. The further Paul and Barnabas went the further they moved from civilization. In the more civilized cities, their lives at least were safe because Rome kept order; but out in the wilds, Paul and Barnabas were under the threat of mob violence. These two were brave and it always takes courage to be a Christian. Ac 14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. Not everybody is going to believe. Our responsibility is to give out the gospel, but it is the hearer's responsibility to receive it and heed to it. We can only give out the word. We can't force people to take it. Ac 14:5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them. *** They fled because they wanted to stone them.

Ac 14:6 They were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the gospel. This did not discourage them; they went on and preached the gospel.***Satan could not stop them. For example: The sun is a great ball of fire. Nothing can hinder it from shining, though man may try to hide from its light and heat. It is the same with men filled with the Word of God and with the Holy Spirit. Nothing can extinguish the fire in their bones. Even when some may reject it. Lystra was a Gentile town; Therefore, the apostles did not quote so freely from the Old Testament at first because the Gentiles would not fully understand it. Note that it is not said that they went into the synagogue of the Jews, as in other cities. But there they preached the Gospel. Ac 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, **Stand upright on thy feet.** And he leaped and walked.

**** Another object lesson of healing. All of Adam's race could not walk uprightly before God. This man had no faith until he heard Paul preach. This man was obedient to Paul's preaching, he leaped and walked. He didn't say I can't but he heeded Paul's message. The physical impotency of that man in Lystra expresses the inward impotency of all mankind before being saved.

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Spiritually all men are crippled in their feet from natural birth. None have ever walked uprightly before God since Adam and Eve stumbled and fell. All have sinned; all come short. All are helpless apart from Christ. His healing also is a beautiful picture of how the Lord lifts us up. All who believe on Jesus; He enables us to stand, leap and walk, by giving us a new life and making us new creatures in Christ Himself. What was the remedy? The Gospel message brings **faith** in the hearts of its hearers; it is the gospel preached. It is the true and pure word of God. Paul did not attempt to heal everybody, but he was ready to deliver those who had faith. The faith of God waits and operates on prepared soil. If you want people to believe in healing, or any other need, give them the gospel. The gospel brought faith unto this man. It is the Gospel message that brings faith in the hearts of its hearers. This healing was a supernatural sign, but did it convict the people around there of their need of a Savior? No. What was the public effect of the healing of the impotent man?

Ac 14:11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; (Zeus) and Paul, Mercurius, (Hermes) because he was the chief speaker. That is what many Christians today encourage. They want the admiration and applause of the public. They count it the highest honor, and a proof of spirituality to be able to brag about what they have done. Not so with Barnabas and Paul. Ac 14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: What did these people have already? They had a false religion. They were in idolatry. They were worshipping men.

Paul and Barnabas avoided everything that would cause their hearers to be occupied with them, or to worship them but wanted to make them see the Lord and His wonderful goodness. Listen to many preachers today that talk about what they have done this week rather than sticking to the word of God. **Mercurius means eloquent learned, shroud, prudent, and crafty.** They didn't see the message; they looked at Paul as crafty. They were using the same old fleshly tactics. This is the way of the world. They don't see or hear the true message. **They called Barnabas, Jupiter** and again that was another false religion. It is false worship which always sets man up as the object of worship. Paul and Barnabas never wanted to call attention to what they have done. They wanted to give the glory to the Lord. History: At Lystra Paul and Barnabas were involved in a strange incident. They were being taken for gods which was the legendary history of Lycaonia. The people around Lystra told a story that once Zeus and Hermes had come to this earth in disguise. None in all the land would give them hospitality until at last two old peasants, took them in.

As a result of history, the whole population was wiped out by the gods except these two, who were made the guardians of a splendid temple and were turned into two great trees when they died. So, when the Lord through Paul healed the crippled man, the people of Lystra were determined not to make the same mistake again.

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They took Barnabas for Zeus the king of the gods. Hermes was the messenger of the gods and, since Paul was the speaker, they called him Hermes. Paul is the chief speaker as well during this age we are in. Ro 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to **my gospel**.

The name of Christ was totally unknown in Lystra. They were a sort of country people, and partly agricultural, who seem to have been deeply sunken in superstition. At the gates of their city there stood a great temple dedicated to Jupiter. Picture Paul and Barnabas coming down from the mountainside and entering the town, and they stand up in the marketplace, or the street, and begin to talk concerning Jesus, the Son of God, who had come down from heaven, suffered and died, but He has ascended on high. The people gathered round them. Among the people, a cripple man listens with much attention. They preach again. The crowds are still greater, and on one occasion, while Paul is in the middle of a sermon, he fixes his eyes upon the cripple man. The apostle Paul gathers that this man has **faith**. **Faith** to be healed. To glorify the name of Christ, Paul cries with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet." The cripple man leaps and praises God. What was it which preceded this man's faith? It is Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But the hearing of what? It was the hearing of the gospel of grace preached by Paul. Why did Paul go and preach to these poor, ignorant, superstitious people the very same truths which he spoke to his Jewish brethren?

The very gospel which he preached at Damascus in the synagogue he preaches here at Lystra in the marketplace. He makes no difference between the education of his hearers in different places; he has the same gospel to preach to them both. Such was life to Paul: all the energies of his spirit were consecrated to preach Christ. He presented testimony everywhere to the gospel of the grace of God. The life which he lived was only valued by him to that end; that the gospel of Christ would go forth. He also regarded the gospel, which had been committed to him by the Lord Himself as what is needed for saints to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was put in trust with the gospel, and he resolved to be faithful though it should cost him his life. How many, believers today are kept lame because of the lack of truth they hear? All of Paul's energies were consecrated to the pursuit of one object. It was that he might everywhere bear testimony to the gospel of the grace of God though it should cost him his life.

What is sad today is that souls starve not being fed on the meat of the word. They become incapable of assurance as believers. 2 Peter 3:17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing **ye know these things before**, beware lest ye also, being led away **with the error of the wicked**, fall from your own steadfastness. There are believers in Jesus now fed on the foam, where men become heady and high-minded? Can we still hear Paul, cheering us on. Run that you may obtain! Our prayer should be that the saints of God return to the substantial meat of the infallible revelation, and cry to the Holy Ghost to be fed upon the word of God. The Apostle Paul has the gospel message for this church age. Eph 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. He did not accept worship from man. Ac 14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

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17 Nevertheless, He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them. Paul was telling them we are the same flesh and blood as you are, we are no different. We must turn from these vanities or emptiness; there is nothing to them. We must turn to the living God. One moment these people wanted to put Paul and Barnabas on a pedestal and next they wanted to stone them. That is how the flesh is, one moment it is patting you on the back telling you how great you are and then the next moment they want to crucify you. Ac 14:19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having **stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.** 20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. History: These certain Jews may have been here for one of two reasons. They may have been deliberately following Paul and Barnabas in an attempt to undo the work that they were doing. Or they may have been corn merchants. The region round Lystra was a great corn growing area and they may have come to buy corn for the cities of Iconium and Antioch. If so, they would be shocked after stoning him, and they were angry to find Paul still preaching. So, they stired up the people against him.

Lystra was a Roman colony. Nevertheless, when the people saw what they had done **they were afraid.** They dragged what they thought was Paul's dead body out of the city. They were afraid of the Roman justice. So, they were trying to get rid of Paul's body in order to escape the consequences of what they did. What sheer courage of Paul. When he came to his senses, his first act was to go right back into the city where he had been stoned. Paul's going straight back amongst those who had tried to murder him would have been more effective than a hundred sermons. ***Paul spoke of this stoning incident in 2Co 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:*** Here we see some of the persecution that the Apostle Paul went through as he wrote to the Corinthians referencing this time. 2Co 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; *** In other words, that is the sentence of Calvary. This is how he took up his cross and followed Christ. This signifies persecution.

At Calvary the death sentence was passed upon the whole old creation. That is the reason; God does not want us to trust in ourselves, in our own achievements and our own abilities. That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Paul states in 2Co 12:1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. **2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.** ***These verses reference this time here at Lystra. Paul waited 14 years to tell this story and the reason he did this is because he didn't want to boast. There were a lot of false brethren that were coming to the Corinthians and telling stories. 2Co 12:3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

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*** He didn't know whether he was in his body or out of his body, but God knew and while he was there, he was caught up into paradise and we know that is where the Lord is. Paul says, there are no words in my vocabulary of what he saw. Paul glories in the new creation who was caught up in heaven, but he did not glory in his own abilities. I believe Paul was stoned to death and I believe God raised him up again.

Three notable lights given in Acts 14:21-28

Ac 14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

(Light 1) There is **the light** of honesty to the people who had chosen to become Christians. He frankly told them that it was through many afflictions they would have to enter the kingdom of God. He offered them no easy way. He acted on the principle that Jesus had come not to make life easy but to make men great by yielding to word of God to be conformed to the image of His Son. Ac 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. **(Light 2)** On the return journey Paul set apart elders in all the little groups of newly made Christians. From the very beginning it was Paul's aim to **build these Christians by the word of His grace**. Ac 14:24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples. **(The third Light – witness to God's work)** Paul and Barnabas never thought that it was their strength which had achieved anything. They spoke of **what God had done with them**. They regarded themselves only as fellow-laborer's with God. We begin to have the right idea and the conviction that we are tools in the hand of God. The basis of our victory over the world or any enemy is Faith in Christ by the word of God through the Holy Spirit.

They left the saints in good hands in every place. They appointed for them elders in every church. The **word appointed or ordained means** to elect by stretching out the hand. Ac 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they **commended them to the Lord**, on whom they believed. This **word to commend means to place alongside or present, or deposit as a trust**; Paul gave them over to God to take care of them. **Paul did not organize them**, but he set them in order. He set up rulers and elders in every church. They were not under a denominational head. Their headquarters was in heaven. Christ is the head of the church. It was an assembly ordered. He did commend them to the elders but first and foremost he **commended them to the Lord**. They left the saints in good hands in every place. The assembly order is scriptural, but not organizational. There is not the first hint of any carnal bounds set about the saints.

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Barnabas and Paul had been committed to the grace of God. A door of faith was opened which was the great marvel. God did it, and it pleased Him to use Paul and Barnabas to spread the Good News of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit confirms the faithfulness of Paul and Barnabas. Ac 14:26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. ***There are two meanings to the word Antioch. **Driven against**, and **speedy as a chariot**; they sped on with the Lord, and the enemy drove his chariots against them.

**** This concludes Paul's first missionary journey and they are back at Antioch. It has taken Paul about 2 years on this first journey. It is about 20 years after the day of Pentecost. Also notice that they in V27 rehearsed all that God had done with them, not all that they had done, but all that God had done with them; how He used them which opened the door unto the Gentiles. There were 7 churches started on this missionary journey.

Note: The word tarried literally means to rub between. It also means also to abide, to tarry, to spend time. It occurs only five times in the New Testament; twice in this chapter; for example, Verse 3, where we learn the nature of their tarrying. They were not idle. They were not engrossed with the things of the world. They ground out some of the old corn of the land of Canaan. They ground out the Word of God between the times of laboring with their hands and praying for the sick and ministering to the saints of spiritual things. Those who learn the rare art of rubbing between, grinding out a little meal, snatching a morsel of truth now and then, eating less, sleeping less, visiting less, reading less of unimportant things, but searching the Word more, these people become the beacon lights to the world.

Acts 15 Unity - December 12, 2024

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Ac 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. The gospel was being preached to Jew and Gentile alike and they were living together as brethren. There were certain Jews to whom all this was unthinkable. They could never forget the position of the Jews had as the chosen people. They were willing that the Gentiles should come into the Church but on the condition that first they follow Jewish tradition.

If this attitude had prevailed, Christianity would have become nothing more than a sect of Judaism. Some of these Jews came down to Antioch and tried to persuade the converts that they would lose everything unless they first accepted Judaism. Paul and Barnabas argued strongly against this. According to Acts 15:3, after being brought on their way by the church, Paul and Barnabas traveled through Phoenicia (Phenice) and Samaria, sharing the news of the conversion of Gentiles to other believers; essentially, they were sent by the Jerusalem church to spread the message that the gospel was open to non-Jewish people, and their journey through these areas was a way to share this news with existing Christian communities. It was at the Jerusalem Church that the question was debated of the legal obligations for Gentiles who had come to follow Jesus Christ to be circumcised. After hearing from Peter, Barnabas, and Paul, James addressed the council with his final decision that we will see in V19–21, which was then recorded in a letter written to the Gentile churches in Antioch. The letter, which is found in V23–29, closes with the council's decision.

The problem was this. Before a Gentile became a member of the Christian Church was it necessary according to the Jews that he should be circumcised and take upon himself the Law of Moses. Or, could a Gentile be received into the Church? Then there was another problem. The strict Jew could have no association with a Gentile. He could not have him as guest nor be his guest. He could not, even do business with him. So then, even if Gentiles were allowed into the Church, how far could Jews and Gentiles associate in the social life in the Church? These problems had to be solved. The solution was not easy. But in the end the Church took the decision that there should be no difference between Jew and Gentile at all. There was only one way out. An appeal was made to Jerusalem, the headquarters of the Church, for a ruling. Paul and Barnabas were prepared to let the facts speak for themselves. But certain of the Pharisees who had become Christians insisted that all converts must be circumcised and keep the Law.

The question; Was the gift of God for the select few or for all the world? If we possess it ourselves, are we to look on it as a privilege or as a responsibility? We fully realize the true meaning of Christianity only when all middle walls of partition are broken down. Paul wrote afterwards that he went up by **revelation** to that conference, taking Titus with him (Galatians 2:1-3). What does this revelation mean. It means God revealed this to him.

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He was fully persuaded that he was Scriptural in his teaching. He had a clear grasp of the utter helplessness of the law to save, or bless, and was thoroughly persuaded that salvation was absolutely by grace. Note Chapter 13:38-39, which we have studied. If the Lord had not revealed to him definitely that he should go and interview the Kingdom Apostles, he would not have gone. Ac 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him **all that believe are justified** from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. The perfect will of God for Paul was given to him in his Gospel. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they met with certain of the Pharisees with the same legal opposition. Legality withstands the grace message everywhere. Ac 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

The problem was not to be solved so easily. Legality is Satan's strong religious fortification. This conference began and continued with much question, and discussion. Ac 15:7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. In answer to the stricter Jews, Peter reminded them how he himself had been responsible for the reception of Cornelius into the Church ten years before this. The proof was that God had granted these very Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit. As far as the Law claims these Gentiles might have been ceremonially unclean; but God had by his Holy Spirit cleansed their hearts. The attempt to try and obey the Law's commands to earn salvation (work) was a losing battle which left every man empty. There was only one way and that is the acceptance of the free gift of the grace of God by self-surrendering faith.

Peter went right to the heart of the question. Note the deep principles which were involved. Can a man earn the favor of God? Or must he admit his own helplessness and be ready in humble faith to accept what the grace of God gives? In effect, the Jews said, religion means earning God's favor by keeping the Law (works). Peter said, we must cast ourselves on the grace of God. Here is the difference between a religion of works and that of grace. Peace will never come to a man until he realizes that he can never put God in his debt; and that all he can do is take what God in his grace gives. The puzzle of Christianity is that the **way to victory is through surrender and weakness**; and **the way to power is through admitting one's own helplessness**. For 20 years, Peter witnessed that both Jews and Gentiles received purity of heart (salvation) and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. It was always by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Not the slightest hint of works was admitted. Then note his stern rebuke. Ac 15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

What does it mean to bring in works, or self-effort, as a means of salvation, or **even perfecting believers**? Water baptism, sabbath-keeping, feet-washing, making restitution, stopping habits, changing your dress, trimming your beard or hair. All these are **acts of "tempting God,"** if they are done in order to be saved, or to receive the Holy Spirit, or to keep saved, or **perfect your walk**. To teach this is to put an unbearable yoke on the neck. It proved unbearable to the fathers; it is unbearable to anybody.

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In Matthew 11, it could be said like this when Jesus spoke: “come unto Me all ye that labor (working for salvation) and are heavy laden (with law keeping); take my yoke (grace) upon you, and learn of Me; for My yoke (grace) is easy and my burden (faith) is light. (Matthew 11:29). Praise God! The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of GRACE and truth; and of His fulness have all we received, and GRACE FOR GRACE. For the law was given by Moses, but GRACE and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:14-17). Then Peter’s unanswerable conclusion: Ac 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. Here we have the only proof they gave that the grace way was the divine way, and was the result of their labors everywhere they had gone. They needed no other proof. Their testimony of years of effective service, seeing many hundreds saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, and unspeakable miracles and wonders, all through simple faith. If this would not convince anyone, nothing else would. They declared that all had been done under their ministry, by **God Himself. He did it according to His grace.**

What they said was beyond any question which was the most interesting of all. Ac 15:13 And after they had held their peace, **James** answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written. These verses are some of the most wonderful verses ever written in this Bible. James spoke. He was the leader of the Jerusalem church. He was the brother of Jesus. He had a special resurrection appearance all to himself in 1Co 15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. He was a pillar of the Church. Paul said in Ga 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother. In **History** it says that James knees were as hard as a camel’s because he knelt in prayer so often and so long. He was also called James the Just. He himself was a exact observer of the Law. If such a man should come down on the side of the Gentiles, then all was well. He declared that the disciples should be allowed into the Church without any hindrance.

Peter proved that salvation was by faith through grace, by showing the beginning of God’s plan for this age. Then Barnabas and Paul demonstrated that salvation was by faith through grace to the Gentiles also, by their witness to God’s mighty works. Finally, James confirmed the arguments of those three Peter, Barnabas, and Paul by Old Testament prophecies. He introduced his remarks by recalling what Peter had said. Then he made known three important truths: First, during this age, God is taking out a people for His Name. Second, at the end of this age, the residue of men, that is, Israel, will seek the Lord. Third, and all the Gentiles, that is, nationally all, but not literally every individual, for some will yield to Christ’s reign with pretended obedience. (See Psalm 18:44; 66:3; 81:15). V13 God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. He is building a Bride for His Son. Ac 15:16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. James quoted Amos 9:11-12. The personal return and presence of the Lord, not simply as a visitor, but as a permanent resident, is the promise of God and the hope of believers.

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Only this can bring in the Millennium. Jesus must come and rebuild the tabernacle of David. Then Israel will be restored and then the world-wide revival will come, even the millennial day. Jesus must be sitting upon the throne of universal dominion and His lovely Bride with Him for these things to be accomplished.

Ac 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. James merely decided they should “not trouble” the Gentiles who have come to faith. He advised further that they give four simple cautions to Gentile converts: 1) that they abstain from pollutions of idols, 2) and from fornication, 3) and from things strangled, 4) and from blood.

These are **not commandments, but admonitions or cautions.**

#1 idols - 1Co 10:19 What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

#2 and from fornication - **** There is such a thing as spiritual fornication; we are to be true to Christ spiritually. We do not take the members of the body of Christ and join them to a harlot or bring them to a false head such as the pope and take his headship. Be true to Christ.

#3 and from things strangled, #4 and from blood What this says spiritually by partaking of the blood is that this life is not a bad life. This old life in the flesh is pretty good. The flesh is ok and we can partake of that blood. We must realize that the old creation is corrupt and there is nothing good in it. It is the new life that has everything not this old fleshly life. Ga 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The significance were each of those cautions:

#1 **we cannot serve two gods**; 1Co 10:19

#2 **We have one head, Christ only.** 1Co 6:15

#3 **Christ gave His life for us**, #4 **only in Christ do we live.** Ga 2:20

Ac 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: Ac 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; They put the Spirit first. It would be wonderful to attend a conference of leaders, led and controlled by the Holy Spirit, in **perfect harmony with the Word of God.** They did not mean by “necessary things,” that they were essential to getting saved, or to keep saved, but in order to “do well.” Carelessness in those practical matters would hinder growth in divine matters. Paul wrote about them in his epistles later on, warning against everything that would impede progress in grace. These necessary things are not stern demands hanging over our heads, but they are the hand of love to guard and guide us in our present walk in this life. Ac 15:30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: They exhorted the saints and confirmed them **in the truth.** Note, that those Antioch saints were already so deeply grounded in the truth of Grace, that the council did not bring them any added light.

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Ac 15:31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. Its discussions brought them “consolation” only, for which they rejoiced. When Paul’s Gospel is known and believed, his message compasses all the truth. The doctrine alone delivers us from bondage by grace through faith. The yoke of bondage was lifted off of their necks. That is what grace always does. What was the result when the Gentiles were freed from the yoke which these False teachers had put upon them? Ac 15:31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. ****

Grace always frees us from the yoke of bondage. Also notice what the result to the saints that follow false teachers. It undermines the soul. It subverts or undermines the truth. This is Paul’s second missionary journey. It was to seek the welfare of the assemblies. It was to insure they were grounded in the truth. Ac 15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.³⁶ And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. The Holy Spirit is leading Paul to wonder how the other saints and the Churches in other places were doing. This is God’s will.

Ac 15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. ³⁸ But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.***Maybe the reason John Mark departed at Pamphylia on the first missionary journey was it was a little more work than he thought. But in 2Ti 4:11, Paul, said only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. *** Paul gives a better report about John Mark at that time, for he had matured. At this time there was contention between Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas split up and went different ways, but yet the Holy Spirit was in control of this because it spread the gospel in different directions. Ac 15:39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; ⁴⁰ And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. ⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Disagreements happen. They happen in our families, with our friends, and they absolutely happen in the Church. As Christians, we need to make sure that we understand how we are supposed to handle these situations when they occur. As always, our source for understanding what God wants us to do, and not do, is the Bible. How we handle these disagreements determines whether we bring glory to God or disruption. There is no doubt God used this division; but this can never be used as an excuse for carnal division. God can redeem good out of evil, yet we are all held accountable for the evil we do, even if God ends up bringing good out of the evil. Later, Paul came to minister with John Mark and to value his contributions to the work of God (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24; 2 Timothy 4:11). The lesson here is we don’t know if it was Mark who changed or Paul. Probably God had a work to do in both of them! We know for a fact that strengthening the churches was Paul’s work, in addition to evangelism. How did Paul strengthen the Churches? He gave them the truth! Christians need the strong meat of the word to grow and mature in and it can only be in the word of God that Paul taught. God used the spilt between Paul and Barnabas to grow the Church.

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Summary:

Believing Jews were openly debating how to let Gentiles into what they saw as the development of the Jewish faith. The Jewish believers had from ancient generations heard the Law of Moses read every Sabbath in the synagogue V21. It was their heritage and culture; The Jerusalem Council recognized that Gentile believers, having been newly welcomed into God's family, would live and serve alongside Jewish believers. A blending of backgrounds and traditions was expected as they gathered to pray, break bread, and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. James wanted to nurture **unity** between Gentile believers and their Jewish brothers and sisters with whom they would eat, worship, and minister. When James stood and declared his judgment to the Jerusalem Council (V19–21), he prioritized **unity** over circumcision and the keeping of the Law of Moses. Rather than making it difficult for the Gentiles to turn to the Lord, the council offered a few instructions to help them keep the peace with their new Jewish brothers and sisters. In the words of Peter during the debate, they wanted to avoid “putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear” (Acts 15:10). There is also the **unity** of the Spirit that Paul later taught that we must consider here.

There are five characteristics of our walk to keep the **unity** of the Spirit described in Eph 4: 2 3. Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the **unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. *****These verses describe how we are to walk. V1 He says walk worthy of the vocation (this is the same Greek word as **High calling** in Phil 3:14). First, with all lowliness. That means we must learn what true humility or humility of mind. It is dependence on the grace of God, which is the only way we are ever going to be able to walk in this new life of humility. #2. Meekness: means we are going to have to let God fight our battles. We cannot fight in our own strength; it is believing God to fight our battle and to put on the whole armor of God. #3 With all longsuffering. This is an attitude. It doesn't mean we suffer for a long time. It is an attitude whereby we may be able to bear with someone else during our walk even as God has been longsuffering with us. #4 forbearing one another in love. Then #5; Endeavouring to keep the **unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.

Then Paul also says in Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the **unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Why did Paul mention these two verses together? *****God does intend to be bring that **unity** about. In the bridal company this will be accomplished to the very greatest degree. Then, he states, the knowledge of the Son of God. This is what God wants to happen through the gifts and those who give out the word. It is the knowledge of the Son of God that we are to be bringing forth. This is what Paul was focused on. It was with giving forth that knowledge of the Son of God to those that were hearing him. This is true unity. Then, unto a perfect man; that means unto a complete man. Nothing missing or nothing left out; no deficiency unto the perfect or the complete or the mature man. Then, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: *****This is what God is wanting to do. He is wanting to produce His Son. The only life that God has ever been completely satisfied with is the life of Christ. He has given that life to us.** He intends that each one of us manifest that life to the degree that we all come together unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

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But Paul states in V14 God **does not** intend for His people to go from place to place hearing every wind of doctrine. There is no **unity** of the Spirit in that. One of the greatest purposes God has for us is that we are not tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Satan is having a hay day with many Christians today because they are not exercised in the knowledge of God's word. They could do exactly what Jesus did when He said, It is written! We are to learn this message so that we are not tossed about to and fro. Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more **children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Satan also has his ministers out there and we see that here. He does it with every wind of doctrine. There so many ungodly doctrines of men that deceive people. It doesn't have to be that way, if they just understood the marvels and the depths of God's word. This verse tells us, you never want to gamble with the devil. Paul tells us in Ga 1:7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. We must have the **unity** of the Spirit. It can only happen as we have spiritual oneness among believers in Christ, created and sustained by the Holy Spirit, by rightly dividing the word of God. There can be no **unity** apart from the word of God.

Acts 16 – Range of Society - The Rich, the Poor, and the Middle Class

Page 1

Ac 15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. Ac 16:1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. *** Paul and Silas met a disciple named Timothy. Timothy's father was a Gentile or a Greek. Paul writes a lot about Timothy. He was Paul's successor. In 2Tim 1:2 Paul refers to him as his dearly beloved son. 2Ti 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul was not his natural father but he was a father in the faith. Paul refers to him as a son in the faith. Timothy was a church, Apostle. Ro 16:21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. Lystra was where Paul was stoned Chap14.

*** Paul refers to Timothy as his fellow worker or his co-laborer. Paul then in Php 2:19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. *** Paul said for I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. Timothy was very dear to Paul. Then Paul writes in 2Ti 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. *** No doubt, Timothy's mother raised him up in the scriptures because in 2Ti 1:5, Paul writes, When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. In chapter 15, we saw that Paul absolutely opposed the teaching of circumcision as a means of salvation, but why did he now circumcise Timothy? After what Paul had said in Chapter 15 about circumcision, he now circumcises Timothy. The reason was 1Cor 9 which gives us the understanding as to why Paul did this.

1Co 9:19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some. 23 And this **I do for the gospel's sake**, that I might be partaker thereof with you.**** Paul wanted to gain them to the Gospel and that is why he circumcised Timothy. Paul knew that this circumcision would not give Timothy more status with God, but it would give him more freedom among the Jews. *** They knew that Timothy's Father was a Greek and his Mother a Jew and if he wasn't circumcised, it would always present problems. Paul circumcised Timothy for the Gospel's sake. Also in Acts 15:1 their contention was that you had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Ac 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

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Ac 16:4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. *** The decrees are in Ac 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. *** There were four decrees; 1. abstain from meats offered to idols, 2. and from blood, and 3. from things strangled, 4. and from fornication: Ac 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*** The results of the decrees going out and that is exactly what grace does, it establishes the Church in the faith and if they are in “order,” they will increase in numbers daily. So, the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily (16:5). How different the report of the labors of those men from today’s reports. These are always exceedingly brief. The character of their teaching and toils is seen by the two results. The first mentioned “strengthened in the faith” - the second – “increase.” Today there is such negligence in this respect. Very few ministers have sufficient love for the saints to feed them on the life sustaining Bread, the Word of grace, which Paul wisely taught. Most preachers itch to tell what they have done and how they have done it.

Oh, how different were those men, who hazarded their lives for the Gospel. Both groups will have their rewards. The one have theirs here and now, Paul and his company will have theirs hereafter and it will be eternal. Ac 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ****The Holy Ghost did not allow Paul to preach in Asia at this time. 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.*** Here they seemed to have trouble finding where they were to go. They first went Phrygia which **means parched place** and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. **Asia means slime and mire** and it tells us of the conditions, there was no fruitful ground there in Asia at that time. So, the Holy Spirit forbid them to go. This word **forbid means to stop or prevent**. So literally the Holy Spirit stopped them or prevented them from going into Asia.

Ac 16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.*** The word **assayed means a test or to endeavor, or to attempt**. They began to test to see where God wanted them to go. **Bithynia means a violent rushing** and it tells us of the condition here of the turmoil. It is not a place where seed can be sown, a violent rushing. So, the Holy Spirit again suffered them not. The word **suffered here means, to let be or permit, or leave alone**. But the Spirit suffered them not. How wonderful to be acquainted with the Holy Spirit’s voice and be so yielded to Him that He can make us to know His will. There is a lack of this today, and many a fruitless word has been spoken, and many useless trips made. It is not enough to say, “Well, He knows my heart.” We get no reward for that. He gets no glory out of that. We should know God’s heart concerning us. If Paul knew it, we may know it too. Let there be in us the persistent purpose to know and to do the perfect will of the Lord, no matter what the cost is. The Lord will see that we have it. Then, too, we shall prove that it is exceedingly beyond all that we could have asked, or even thought. They had no peace about going in to Bithynia. We don’t know how, but somehow the Holy Spirit suffered them not. It wasn’t as strong as forbidding them but they just didn’t feel the leading to go into Bithynia. Sometimes we seek the leading of the Holy Spirit and say are you sure Lord?

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There is a yielding to that first leading and that is important in our lives as well. As the Holy Spirit led them, they yielded to that and we to as the Holy Spirit leads us, we must yield to it. These doors seemed shut to Paul. It must have seemed strange to him that he was barred from the Roman province of Asia by the Holy Spirit; it contained Ephesus and all the recipients of the letters to the seven churches in the book of the Revelation. Ac 16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. **** This is a really good leading of the Holy Spirit. There was a man of Macedonia praying and said come over and help us. Then for Paul, Ac 16:10 And after he had seen the **vision**, immediately **we** endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. **What was this vision? History not scripture says:** There is a theory. There was one man who had succeeded in conquering the world. That was Alexander the Great. He was one of history's greatest military minds who, as King of Macedonia and Persia, established the largest empire the ancient world had ever seen. Alexander the Great is revered as one of the most powerful and influential leaders the ancient world ever produced.

He died at the age of 32. This vision of Paul's would seem that the whole situation was designed to make Paul remember Alexander. The full name of Troas was Alexandrian Troas after Alexander. Just across the sea was Philippi, called after Alexander's father. Farther on was Thessalonica called after Alexander's half-sister. The district was permeated with memories of Alexander; and Alexander was the man who had said that his aim was "to marry the east to the west" and so make one world. It may well be that there came to Paul the vision of Alexander, the man who had conquered the world, and that this vision gave Paul a new impulse towards making one world for Christ. Again, this is only speculation and food for thought. *** The interesting thing here to note is that they yielded to the first forbidding, that the Lord seemed to close the door and they yielded to that and so here God gives them a practical vision. **Note this:** The story begins to be told not in the third person using "they" but in the first person, using the word "we." That tells us that Luke the writer of Acts, was there, an eye-witness and a companion of Paul. Why should he so suddenly emerge on the scene? Luke was a doctor. We wonder if he met Paul then, because Paul needed his professional services, having fallen ill and so being barred from making the journeys he would like to make? If this is so, it is suggestive to reflect that Paul took even his weakness and his pain as a message from God. Luke the writer of Acts was with them and joined them at Troas.

Ac 16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, **we** came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. This is where the Holy Spirit wants the message preached. Philippi means lover of horse. That is the race. These are racing saints for the truth. They are the lover of the race. Philippi was the chief city of that part of Macedonia. It was just a Roman colony. Ac 16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the **sabbath** we went out of the city by **a river side**, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and **spake unto the women** which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named **Lydia, a seller of purple**, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

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15 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. The history of Neapolis was that it was a seaport of Philippi. Philippi had a long history. Once it had been called Crenides which means “The Springs” But Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander, had fortified it as a barrier against the Thracians and had given it his own name. At one time Neapolis had possessed famous gold mines, but by Paul’s time these were worked out. Later it had been the scene of one of the most famous battles in the world, when Augustus won for himself the Roman Empire. Philippi was a Roman colony. Roman colonies were usually strategic centers. In them Rome planted little groups of army veterans who had completed their military service. They wore the Roman dress, spoke the Roman language and used the Roman laws no matter where they were. Nowhere was there greater pride in Roman citizenship than in these outposts of Rome. In Philippi there was no Jewish synagogue from which to start. But where the Jews were unable to have a synagogue, they had a place of prayer and these places of prayer were usually by the riverside.

On the Sabbath Paul and his friends went there and talked with the women who met in that place. The extraordinary thing about Paul’s work in Philippi is the amazing cross-section of the population that was won for Christ. Lydia came from the very top end of the social scale; she was a purple merchant. The purple dye had to be gathered drop by drop from a certain shell-fish and was so costly that to dye a pound of wool with it would take the equivalent of 150 British pounds. Lydia, wealthy woman and merchant prince that she was, was won for Christ. Here was the fertile ground and the heart that was willing. *** Lydia’s name **means a fire brand or travailing**. She was waiting to be lit, we might say. She is a seller of purple and that purple speaks of royalty. She deals in royalty. Notice she is from Thyatira and in Re 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; **There was a Church in Thyatira. Lydia was from Thyatira but she wasn’t dwelling there, she was dwelling in Philippi. Thyatira means **odor of affliction**. It tells us of her heart attitude. We see here that the Lord opened her heart under Paul’s gospel. That is what the Spirit has done to our hearts. He has opened our hearts up to Paul’s Gospel.

Paul met Lydia near a riverbank, where the town’s Jewish community gathered to worship on Saturdays. Lydia was Jewish and that the town of Philippi did not have enough Jewish residents to have a synagogue and so the Jewish people met near a riverbank to hold their worship services. The Holy Spirit is seeking out such hearts in the saints today that are attentive to Paul’s message and will invite this message into their whole household like Lydia did. Hindrance comes and Satan seeks to hinder the message and here he does it through false worship. Ac 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, **I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her**. And he came out the same hour. And she did this many days in v18. Why would Paul wait? Because it was the Holy Spirit’s leading. *** She brought her master much gain by soothsaying. Her master was Satan. He is the one that gains from witchcraft, if you could call it gain, and Paul said she brought her masters much gain.

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Notice she cries out which speaks to us about false worship. Then notice she said, these men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. She actually gave a testimony of what Paul's message is, but she is not converted. This is not her message at all. It is not from the heart; it is just flattery. If Lydia came from the top end of the social scale, this slave to her master Satan came from the bottom. She was a person who could give predictions to guide men about the future. She had fallen into the hands of dishonest men who used her misfortune for their gain. When Paul cured her of her madness, these men did not feel joy at her restoration to health but anger that their source of revenue was gone. They appealed to the pride of the Romans and they succeeded in having Paul and Silas arrested. Not only were they arrested; they were put in the inner prison in the stocks. It may be that not only their feet but their hands and their necks also were held in the stocks. Ac 16:19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, 20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. They were appealing to the government, the Roman authority telling them that Paul and the others saying they were trying to take their place of authority. **** Here we see Paul and Silas yielding to the Holy Spirit and what happens? Persecution comes. How many times do we feel that way? Ac 16:25 And at **midnight** Paul and Silas prayed, and **sang praises unto God**: and the prisoners heard them. **** Paul and Silas prayed which is the way of victory. Paul did not try and defend himself or complain. Paul knew it was not the jailer who administered the beatings but the enemy himself. Regardless of our circumstances sing praises unto God. Ps 22:3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. The victory is when we praise God no matter what. Our responsibility is to give God the Praise. The victory is won through faith. God wants us to believe and have faith. It wasn't a silent prayer because the prisoners heard them. Our part is to praise God. **Midnight** occurs 14 times; it means deliverance and salvation.

We note three things about Paul. (1) He could sing hymns when he was fast in the stocks in the inner prison at midnight. The one thing you can never take away from a Christian is God and the presence of Jesus Christ. With God there is freedom even in a prison and even at midnight there is light. (2) He was quite willing to open the door of salvation to the jailer who had shut the door of the prison on him. There was never a grudge in Paul's nature. He could preach to the very man who had fastened him in the stocks. (3) He could stand on his dignity. He claimed his rights as a Roman citizen. To scourge a Roman citizen was a crime punishable by death. But Paul was not standing on his dignity for his own sake but for the sake of the Christians he was leaving behind in Philippi. He wanted it to be seen that they were not without influential friends. Ac 16:26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. This is my thought on this. If Paul and Silas were singing and praising God while in this prison, I wonder if this great earthquake that came from God that shook the prison doors open, was just the Lord who joined singing bass along with Paul and Silas. It shook this place to the foundation.

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Paul represents the Gospel. You can't keep the Gospel bound! Paul didn't need to be freed; he was free. The earthquake freed those in bondage by the Gospel. The victor is when we praise God no matter what. Our responsibility is to give God the praise. Victory is won through faith. In the natural what would we do? God sent an earthquake and the bands were off, well the next thing for us, is to get out of there and run. But Paul and Silas didn't. Ac 16:27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. *** This was the natural inclination to kill yourself because they are going to kill you when they find out the prisoners are gone. Ac 16:28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Paul wasn't worried about freedom. He wasn't thinking about escaping at all. God had something further to do. Here God used an earthquake to set their bonds free. It set the Gospel free. Paul wrote 2Ti 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Men try to keep Paul's message out of reach, but God will use whatever means to bring the Gospel to others. Ac 16:29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? *** Why would this jailor ask that? Evidently because he had been hearing all of the prayer and the praise and worship service over in v 25. Now he was convicted. What was it that convicted him was Paul's heart attitude. Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. This may have been the same man that had caused the stripes and beat Paul. God is interested in salvation for the jailor. Paul didn't give him a long sermon or do's and don't's. All Paul said was believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Ac 16:31 And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. All of the house not saved because of this man but they were saved because they received the testimony. One word, BELIEVE - at the beginning and end of the record, Ac 16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Ac 16:32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. *** This is why all his house was saved was because they all heard it and they all believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The results of Paul's persecution was Salvation for the jailor and his house. Paul and Silas were loosed from their bondage. The Jailor and his whole house were saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Ac 16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. Now this Jailor ministers to Paul and his needs. Ac 16:35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. 36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

The interesting thing about the jailor is that he immediately proved his conversion by his deeds. No sooner had he turned to Christ than he washed the wounds on the prisoners' backs and set a meal before them. Christianity is a change of heart which will change the deeds otherwise it is a fake thing. Paul was a Roman citizen. He had rights and it was against Roman law to beat a Roman uncondemned. Ac 16:37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

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*** God really didn't use the earthquake so much to set Paul free, as God used it to set the jailor and those that were in bondage free. Here we see how God set Paul free, it was through the civil authorities. Because Paul said, I am not going to leave out of here quietly, I want them to come down and fetch us out themselves.

Why? They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; Peter wrote, 1Pe 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. **To love them that persecute you.**

Ac 16:38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. 39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. 40 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. If Lydia came from the top end of the social scale and the slave-girl from the bottom, the Roman jailer was one of the sturdy middle class who made up the Roman civil service; and so, **in these three the whole range of society was complete. The Rich, the Poor, and the Middle class!**

Dad,

Here are the key themes below that I gathered from the message tonight.

Key Themes:

- **Gospel for All Classes:** The story highlights the Gospel's reach across societal classes—Lydia (the rich), the slave girl (the poor), and the jailer (the middle class).
- **Guidance of the Holy Spirit:** Paul and Silas follow the Spirit's leading, even when it seems counterintuitive.
- **Power of Praise:** Despite being in prison, Paul and Silas praise God, and their faith results in a miraculous earthquake and the salvation of the jailer's household.
- **Transformation and Faith:** From Lydia's hospitality to the jailer's kindness, genuine faith leads to tangible actions.

This chapter underscores the unifying power of the Gospel to transform lives, regardless of wealth, status, or background.

Love,

Jon Jon

Acts 17 – January 9, 2025

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Ac 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. *** He uses the word “they” here why? It tells us that Luke stayed at Philippi because Luke is not with them here. They had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and did not stop to preach there. It was because the Holy Spirit was leading them to Thessalonica. Thessalonica has two meanings, 1. Victory over falsity and 2. victory over the tossing of the law. We must have this if we are going to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Paul comes to this city with the twofold victory. He went into the synagogue and he reasoned with the Jews. The victory message is this: That Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. The first verse of this chapter is amazing. It sounds like a pleasant stroll; but Philippi was 33 Roman miles from Amphipolis; Amphipolis was 30 miles from Apollonia; and Apollonia was 37 miles from Thessalonica. A journey of over 100 miles is in this first verse.

Ac 17:4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. As usual Paul began his work in the synagogue. His great success was not so much among the Jews as among the Gentiles. This infuriated the Jews for they looked on these Gentiles as their people and here was Paul stealing them before their very eyes. They had dragged Jason and his friends before the magistrates, they charged the Christian missionaries with preaching political insurrection. Ac 17:6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 Whom **Jason hath received**: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

**** Notice that some received the gospel and accepted Christ and some did not. They didn't find Paul so they drew Jason out and brought them to the magistrates. Notice also that they accused them saying these that have turned the world upside down. It wasn't the Gospel that had turned the world upside down but it was sin that turned the world upside down. It is the Gospel that heals. Notice here Jason hath received. He had taken the gospel in. Ac 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. Berea was 60 miles west of Thessalonica. Three things stand out in this short section. He set the people of Berea searching the scriptures. The Jews were certain that Jesus was not the Messiah because he had been crucified. They knew nothing of the resurrection. To them a man who had been crucified was a condemned man. It was no doubt in passages in Isaiah 53:1-12 that Paul told the people of Berea about Jesus. Then not only the Jews opposed Paul in Thessalonica; they pursued him to Berea. They thought that they were doing God a favor by trying to silence Paul. But we see the courage of Paul.

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He had been imprisoned in Philippi; he had left Thessalonica in danger of his life. He went in darkness; and once again in Berea he had to flee for his life. Most men would have abandoned this, but the idea of turning back never occurred to Paul. Ac 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

The people of Berea in the Bible are known for their open-mindedness, eagerness to learn, and willingness to accept the message of God: Does this describe Us!

Open-minded: The Bereans were more open-minded than the people of Thessalonica.

Eager to learn: They were hungry to learn and eagerly received the word of God.

Willing to accept: They were very willing to receive God's message.

Examined the Scriptures: They compared what Paul taught to the Old Testament Scriptures to verify that it was true.

Commended by Paul: Paul commended the Bereans for seeking guidance from the Lord, not men.

Many became believers: Many Jews and influential Greek men and women became believers in Jesus.

Guarded Paul's safety: The Bereans guarded Paul's safety.

Continued to grow in their faith: They continued to grow in their faith

This appears to be a good start and picture of full overcomers in the faith

Ac 17:13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. There was always opposition, Satan always attempts to oppose the Gospel. Ac 17:14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. 15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto **Athens**: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. 16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. **Athens** means uncertainty. Athens at this time was the chief seat of Grecian learning and civilization.

Athens was still the greatest university town in the world, which men pursued learning from all over. It was a city of many gods. It was said that there were more statues of the gods in Athens than in all the rest of Greece put together. In the great city square people met to talk, for in Athens they did not do much more than that. Paul would have no difficulty in getting someone to talk to and the philosophers soon discovered him. Ac 17:18 Then **certain philosophers** of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? The Epicureans believed that everything happened by chance. They also believed that death was the end of all. They believed that the gods were remote from the world and did not care. They believed that pleasure was the chief end of man. They did not mean fleshly and material pleasure; for the highest pleasure was that which brought no pain.

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There were the Stoics. They believed that everything was God. God was fiery spirit. That spirit grew dull in matter but it was in everything. What gave men life was that a little spark of that spirit dwelt in them and when they died it returned to God. They believed that everything that happened was the will of God and therefore must be accepted without resentment. They believed that every so often the world disintegrated in a blaze and started all over again on the same cycle of events. What a difference from the Berean saints.

Athens in Paul's day:

The city was a wealthy, cultured; it was a city that was once the center of the Greek Empire: The population of Athens was probably around 250,000 at that time. Athens was part of the Roman Empire, but it was still considered the intellectual and philosophical center of the Roman world. The city had fallen into disrepair, with a decline in moral values. The city was full of idols, including statues of Greco-Roman gods made from gold, silver, marble, and other precious stones. Athens was home to many great philosophers, including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, and Euripides. History says that Paul's boat anchored in Faliro, the main port area of Athens at the time. The Athenians had an altar to the "unknown god," which may have been a name for any god that existed but whose name and nature hadn't yet been revealed to the Greeks. Paul was concerned to see the city full of idols, but he began his sermon by appealing to the Athenians' interest in spiritual things. He sensed that some of the Athenians may have had a sincere desire to learn about the Lord.

This word philosophers means fond of wise things, which describes Athens. One philosopher was from the Epicureans. The word Epicurean means helper or defender. It comes from a man by that name and his doctrine had wide acceptance at that time throughout Asia. What you find in Philosophy is a practical guide to happiness. True pleasure and not absolute truth: This is what their goal aimed at. They thought their whole purpose in living was to find happiness and pleasure. They held that the world was made by chance. There is no providence or far-sightedness, or wisdom. They did not believe in the resurrection, nor was there any immorality. Pleasure was the key thing. This is exactly what they lived by. They believe in the big bang theory, no providence and no resurrection and no judgment. They deny all of these things and are not accountable for anything they do. It is licentiousness, which means disregarding accepted rules and standards; and moral unrestraint. The Stoicks were **founded** in Athens. They derived this name from a porch in Athens where he taught.

Stoick means "the painted porch." These Stoicks regarded God and the world as power. They saw all creation as divine. They had to live in harmony with nature and their planet. They spoke of conformability with reason and the demands of universal good. Their chief religious boast was that they were indifferent under all circumstances. They did not rejoice when they were blessed and they didn't say anything when hurt came. Some claim that this system has a close connection to Christianity, but it is based upon pride and individual independence. It has nothing to do with faith and humility. Another word for Stoicism is self-killing. Kill your desires; deny your desires; deny your emotions. It leads to legality and there is no victory in that. That is not the Gospel. The grace of God is the only deliverance and victory. **These philosophers come along and refer to Paul as babblers.** They said, He (Paul) seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. This is the same message that we preach today as Paul preached, it is Jesus and the resurrection.

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Ac 17:19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. 21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or **to hear some new thing.**)****

From what we said above, it sure seems Paul has his work cut out for him. There are those that really don't want to know the Gospel, or to know Jesus Christ, they just want to hear some new thing. A lot of Christians visit Churches in the same way. They are really not interested in seeking out the Gospel or seeking out the truth, they just want to know and hear what you have to say to get some new thing. What attracted the Athenians to the message which Paul preached? This was their superstitious nature. They heard some new thing. They erected an altar to the unknown god. They took Paul to the Areopagus (G697 the Greek for Mars' Hill). It was the name both of the hill and the court that met on it. The court was very select, perhaps only thirty members. It dealt with cases of homicide and had the oversight of public morals. There, in the most learned city in the world and before the most exclusive of courts, **Paul had to state his faith from this place.** It might have overwhelmed anyone else; but Paul was never ashamed of the gospel of Christ. To him this was another God-given opportunity to witness for Christ.

This is a picture of faith which Paul had in the Lord Jesus Christ, and God gave him the grace by this faith to "move a mountain" in their hearts so to speak with these men but only some believed. Ac 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. That word superstitious means to be reverent to demons. That is exactly what superstition is. Right off the bat Paul begins to show the bankruptcy of Greek philosophy. His first words are polite words, but they are still fighting words. Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very superstitious or another word is religious. The Stoics and Epicureans were trying to get the people to stop being what this word "very religious" describes. It's the Greek word deisidaimonesteros (probably one of the longest Greek words in the New Testament), and it is made up of two words: "daizy," meaning very fearful of and "daimon," meaning demons or gods. It's usually translated as demons. And interestingly, deisidaimonesteros was one of the buzzwords used by the Epicureans.

They used this word as an insult of the superstitious fear of demons that many Athenians had. In the Greek dictionary, the literal definition is "very fearful of demons." And that fear made them preoccupied with religion, which is why "very religious" is a legitimate translation. One translation much given to fear of the gods. Another translation says too superstitious, and another is given up to demon worship. But fear of demons is at the root of the word. The Athenians are overly fearful of demons and/or overly superstitious. In doing that Paul was temporarily siding with the Stoics and Epicureans. I think both of them would have been quite happy with this first phrase since they had been accusing the Athenians of exactly that for quite some time. History says they had at least 30,000 public idols? Greeks were scared to death of offending their demons or their gods. So right off the bat Paul is playing one group in the Areopagus against another group. He is putting his finger on one of the most controversial spots that he could for these philosophers.

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23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. Paul says, for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship... Notice that he doesn't let the Epicureans and Stoics off the hook. They didn't dare stop worshipping these idols. They believed it could have been their death if they stopped worshipping these idols. Whereas the other Athenians feared the gods, these philosophers feared public opinion. So, their opposition was more underhanded. Paul is already creating some tension in this crowd. He agrees with some of them that such idolatry is very superstitious or very fearful of demons. The Stoics and Epicureans, while opposing the idolatry continued to worship out fear of what others would think. These are well-admired philosophers, but they don't have a leg to stand on in opposing Paul. *** They were acknowledging their ignorance of God with this altar to the unknown God.

Paul says, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD... This was yet another sore spot for the Stoics because this altar came as a result of one of their Stoic philosophers, Epimenides. According to history, the story goes that a plague hit Athens in about 550 BC, and no matter how much they sacrificed to the gods or applied medicine, people were dying off like flies. So, the city elders called for Epimenides, the philosopher poet. For the Greeks, a poet was equivalent to a prophet. They were thought to have been inspired by the gods. And Epimenides was revered by all of the Greeks. They thought that Zeus himself inspired him. So anyway, they called for Epimenides to see if he could figure out why they were having this plague. Epimenides told the Athenians to let some black and white sheep loose in the Areopagus (right where Paul is standing), and as the sheep wandered around the city, to erect an altar any place where one of the sheep would lie down, and then to sacrifice the sheep on that altar. Since they didn't know which god had sent this disaster, they inscribed, "to the unknown god" on each of these altars. Ancient writers indicate that there were a number of these altars to the unknown god in that city.

Now what Paul is doing here is so clever. He is showing the utter inconsistency of these philosophers. They claimed to be opposed to superstition, yet practiced it. They claimed to be wise, yet admit that they don't know the name of a god who brought disaster that no other god, including Zeus could stop. They can't attack Paul for opposing idolatry because they want to oppose it themselves. Nor can they disagree with Paul about God, since they've already admitted that they do not know much about Him. But Paul tells them, but I am going to declare him unto you. That is exactly what the Gospel does. From this situation Paul takes his starting point. Paul is getting these philosophers into a corner. Their most revered and supposedly inspired prophet was the one who set up these altars. He didn't even know who God was. It wasn't Zeus or Athena or anyone else that they knew because those gods were not able to help them in their time of need. They were admitting to being ignorant about the most important God of all. But because they worshipped the unknown God, they were worshipping the God that Paul was giving them through the Gospel. And then because they admired Epimenides, they would have a harder time getting on Paul's case. Paul says, therefore, the One true God whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you. There are a series of steps in his sermon. Paul tells them, I am going to declare Jesus unto you. That is exactly what the Gospel does. God was now seeking to reveal Himself through the Gospel. The God that they did not know was seeking to be revealed to them through the Gospel.

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That is the same that God would do for us as we search the scriptures daily like the Berean saints did. So, what has Paul done so far? In verse 22 Paul has identified something that the Epicureans and Stoics find distasteful about Athens and agreed with them that it is distasteful. Paul is siding with one group of philosophers that this idolatry is not good. This upsets some of the philosophers. In verse 23 he shows that the Epicureans and Stoics have not solved the problem, but really are a part of the problem of this very religious fear of demons. Then, they do not have the answers since their own philosopher, Epimenides did not know the God who is above all Greek gods. Yet, in bringing up this altar, Paul is making a theological statement that is amazing. Paul's God and Savior Jesus Christ is above all Greek gods. Our God cannot be controlled by Greek gods. And the story of Epimenides would prove that. Paul's God is sovereign. In fact, Paul will now proceed to describe in great detail the Christian God whom the Greeks do not know and show how awesome He is.

Ac 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;*** Right off Paul says that God who made the world and all things therein, He is the creator; He made all of this and Paul introduces God as the creator. Paul goes on and says, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth; in other words, He owns it all, and it is all His. He doesn't dwell in temples made with hands. Ac 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; *** God is worshiped for who He is, He giveth life. God has guided history. He was behind the rise and fall of nations in the days gone by; his hand is on the helm of things now. Ac 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*** We all came from Adam. Paul here in V 28 is contrasting the God of creation with the gods they knew. Ac 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

*** How silly that man would make an image and say that is God and worship it. That is exactly what these philosophers do. Ac 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: ** Turn from sin why? Ac 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*** God has appointed a day of judgment. Ac 17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. *** They rejected and mocked the truth and the world today rejects and mocks the truth today. Ac 17:33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and **believed: (Faith took hold)** among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. Dionysius means divinely touched and he is a yoke bearing light.

History says, at the time of Christ's death, Dionysius was in Egypt and upon observing the such darkness, his comment was that the God of nature sympathizes with one who suffers and here at Athens. He believed and he was later burned as a martyr for the truth in A.D. 95.

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But still, the Gospel goes forth for some seed fell on good ground. For our example we have Dionysius and a woman named Damaris received the truth. It would seem on the whole that Paul had less success in Athens than anywhere else. It was typical of the Athenians that all they wanted to do was talk. They did not want action; believing faith is in action. They did not even want conclusions. They wanted simply mental stimulus. There were three main reactions. Some mocked. It is possible to make a joke of life; but those who do so will find that what began as comedy must end in tragedy. Some put off their decision. The most dangerous of all days is when a man discovers how easy it is to talk about tomorrow. Still some believed. The wise man knows that only the fool will reject God's offer. Two converts are named. There is Dionysius the Areopagite. It is said, the Areopagus was composed of perhaps not more than thirty people; so that Dionysius must have been one of the intellectual aristocracy of Athens. There was the woman, Damaris; little woman; yoke bearing wife. Type of the bride of Christ. Not afraid of toil & Burden bearing.

The position of women in Athens was very restricted. It is unlikely that any respectable woman would have been in the market square at all. The likelihood is that she turned from a way of shame to a way of life. Once again, we see the gospel making its appeal to all classes and conditions of men and women. It is also significant that believing responses came equally from men and women. Paul's message applies to all and was addressed to them both and no discrimination was made between the men and women in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In all the ways that matter most for time and eternity men and women are the same: equally in need of the forgiveness of sins, equally responsible for their lives before God, and equally able to respond in faith and love.

Summary:

What was it that Paul said to this people; they are like people today, who think themselves the smartest in the world? Surely anyone can see that Paul had his work cut out for him. The descendants of Plato and Aristotle were utterly unlikely to believe that they could live forever only if they committed themselves to some amateur Jewish rabbi. He who had been executed by the Romans; and then supposedly had risen from the dead! The very idea of the resurrection of the body was an insult to everything any Athenian thought of at that time. It is not too much to say that the Gospel of the Apostle Paul was as unlikely a message as could have been conceived in that time and place. These people might have thought Salvation of the world through a Jew, Jesus Christ? The Jews were a despised race among the Greeks and Romans. These people prided themselves on believing in many gods.

Salvation by death on a cross, was a horrifying cruelty of which educated Greeks and Romans were ashamed. But the faith of us believers is that by faith, we see and know God. Our Lord provides our all in all; we cannot live without food or air which He supplies. In Him we live and move and have our being. Our lives are turned toward God, the true God, the living God. And the proof of all of this is that Jesus, who will execute God's judgment one day, rose from the dead that we who believe might live forever with Him! Paul not only gave them this Gospel, but he plainly said that these people, and people today who pride themselves on their wisdom, are ignorant of the most important things any human being could ever know. 1Jo 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Comments from tonight's Lesson which I appreciate:

Key Lessons:

1. The Gospel Divides Hearts:
 - In Thessalonica, some accept Paul's message while others reject it, showing that the Gospel often elicits diverse reactions. Faith is a personal choice, and not all will receive it.
2. Seek the Truth Like the Bereans:
 - The Bereans are a model of open-mindedness, eagerness to learn, and diligence in verifying truth through Scripture. They remind us to approach faith with both enthusiasm and critical examination.
3. Faith Requires Courage and Perseverance:
 - Paul faces hostility and physical danger repeatedly but remains steadfast. His determination to preach despite opposition inspires believers to persist in their calling, regardless of challenges.
4. God Reveals Himself to All People:
 - In Athens, Paul uses the altar to the "Unknown God" to bridge cultural gaps, showing that God is not confined to human-made idols or philosophies. His message underscores that God seeks a relationship with all.
5. Repentance and Judgment Are Central to the Gospel:
 - Paul calls people to repent because God has appointed a day of judgment, proven by Jesus' resurrection. This highlights the seriousness of sin and the hope found in Christ.
6. The Gospel Transcends Culture and Intellect:
 - Paul speaks to philosophers in Athens, adapting his message to their worldview. His approach teaches the importance of contextualizing the Gospel while staying faithful to its core truth.
7. The Power of the Resurrection:
 - Jesus' resurrection is central to Paul's message. It validates God's power, confirms the truth of the Gospel, and offers hope of eternal life for all who believe.
8. Some Will Mock, Others Will Believe:
 - In Athens, reactions range from ridicule to belief, emphasizing that not everyone will accept the Gospel. However, even a few genuine converts—like Dionysius and Damaris—can have lasting impact.

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Ac 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation, they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. **** Corinth means satiated. It is like a sponge that you satiate or fill with water. Satisfy means to satisfy to the full or gratify completely. To provide with more than enough. In Paul's day Corinth was a great place of mental activity as well as commercial and manufacturing enterprise and there was immorality. Corinth is typical of organized Christians today. They are satiated and if look at 1Co 4:6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? *** These Corinthians were puffed up. What do you have that God did not give you? We have nothing that God didn't give us. Then Paul tells them the meaning of their name. Isn't it interesting how the Holy Spirit does this. Look at 1Co 4:8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.*** Today we can see that satiated condition in the Church. Aquila means, I shall be nourished in Hebrew, and it means Eagle in Latin and in Greek it means immovable. We can see a little of his character in his name. Priscilla's name means a little old woman or little ancient. Paul refers to them in Ro 16:3 as my helpers in Christ Jesus. Ro 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:*** They had a great place in the Gospel.

Corinth was a key city of Greece. Greece is almost cut in two by the sea. On one side is the Saronic Gulf with its port of Cenchrea and on the other is the Corinthian Gulf with its port of Lechaëum. Between the two there is a neck of land less than five miles across and on that peninsula stood Corinth. All north and south traffic in Greece had to pass through Corinth because there was no other way, Men called it "The Bridge of Greece." The voyage around the southern extremity of Greece was a very dangerous voyage. The southernmost cape was Cape Malea and to round it was the equivalent of rounding Cape Horn. It was also very dangerous. The Greeks had a proverb, "Let him who thinks of sailing round Malea make his will." Consequently, the east to west trade of the Mediterranean also passed through Corinth, for men chose that way rather than the dangerous voyage round Malea. Corinth was the market place of Greece. Corinth was more than a great commercial center. It was the home of the Isthmian Games which were second only to the Olympic Games. Corinth was also a wicked city. The Greeks lived a life of lustful corruption. The word Corinthian came into the English language to describe a reckless person. In Greece if ever a Corinthian was shown on the stage, he was shown drunk. Dominating Corinth stood on the hill of the Acropolis. The hill was not only a fortress; it was a temple of Aphrodite the Greek goddess of love, beauty, desire, and sexuality. She was also associated with fertility, marriage, and the sea.

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In its great days the temple had one thousand priestesses of Aphrodite who were sacred prostitutes and who, at evening, came down to the city streets to work their trade. This was the city in which Paul lived and worked and had some of his greatest triumphs. When he was writing to the Corinthians, he made a list of all kinds of wickedness. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And then comes the glorious phrase, and such were some of you (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). The very iniquity of Corinth was the opportunity of Christ. Ac 18:6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, **believed on the Lord** with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul proceeded to devote himself entirely to preaching and he kept testifying to the Jews that Jesus was God's Anointed One. When they opposed him and spoke blasphemous words, he shook out his raiment against them and said, "Your blood be on your own head; I am clean; from now on I will go to the Gentiles." So, he removed from there and went to the house of a man called Justus, who was a worshipper of God, and whose house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians listened and believed and were baptized. The Lord said to Paul in a vision by night, be not afraid; go on speaking and do not be silent, because I am with you and no one will lay hands on you to hurt you, for many people are mine in this city. The hostility and persecution from the Jews must have been unusually strong, to cause Paul to be deeply tempted with fear, as verse 9 suggests. He settled there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Ac 18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Here we have a vivid light on the kind of life that Paul lived. He was a rabbi and according to Jewish practice every rabbi must have a trade. He must take no money for preaching and teaching and must make his own living. We find rabbis following every respectable trade. It meant that they never became disconnected scholars and always knew what the life of the working-man was like. Baptism in water was always observed by the apostles immediately upon accepting Christ. Water baptism symbolized by separation between the old and the new creations, between Egypt and Canaan, between the world and the Church, and between Satan and God. Death and resurrection, which is the great gulf fixed between these two eternal opposites, is figured by water baptism. By Water Baptism symbolically, we go down into death and the grave, and come up again alive in symbol. Water baptism is the first manifest act of reckoning ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. We begin to walk in newness of life the moment we are born again. We begin to show it out by water baptism.

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Note; Paul did not contradict himself in saying, Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel in (I Corinthians 1:14-17). He held the memorial of baptism in its place and value, as a symbol. Undue stress is put upon it sometimes; therefore, the apostle's caution is very timely. Our old man was crucified with Christ at the cross. We are not any more saved, nor more justified before God, by being baptized. It is symbolic. Water baptism doesn't make us more saved. The apostles all baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, because He is the divinely ordained Head, or Lord of the Church, or Body of Christ. Note also that Paul is described as a tent-maker. Tarsus, was in Cilicia; and in that province there were herds of a certain kind of goat with a special kind of fleece. Out of that fleece a cloth called cilicium was made which was used for making tents and curtains and hangings. Cilicium was a hair-cloth material made from goat's hair that was used by the Greeks and Romans. Also, it was used as a hair shirt worn under clothing as a form of religious exercise and discipline. Paul worked at that trade, although the Greek word used means more than a tent-maker; it means a leather-worker and Paul must have been a skilled craftsman. But he always gloried in the fact that he was a burden to no man (1 Thes. 2:9; 2 Thes. 3:8; 2 Cor 11:9).

Ac 18:12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, 13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. 16 And he drave them from the judgment seat. 17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things. The Jews attempted to get Gallio to act against the Christians. Gallio was famous for his kindness. The Jews tried to take advantage of Gallio but he was an neutral Roman. He was well aware that Paul and his friends were not guilty of any crime and that the Jews were trying to use him for their own purposes. At the side of the judgment seat were his armed men with their official rods and he ordered them to drive the Jews from his Judgment seat. The latter part of Acts 18:17, "Gallio cared for none of those things." That has often been taken to mean that Gallio was uninterested, but its real meaning is that he was absolutely impartial and refused to allow himself to be influenced.

Ac18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. Went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order:

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Since Paul's first focus on this trip was strengthening all the disciples, he went back to the churches already founded on previous missionary works. This would include congregations in Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch. He went strengthening all the disciples: Paul's passion for building disciples, not merely making converts, was again evident. This work was important to Paul. If Paul were to visit one of our modern congregations, he would want to know: "How strong of a disciple are you? What can I do to strengthen your walk with Jesus Christ?" He would remind us all that it isn't enough to make a strong beginning with Jesus, but we must always be growing in strength. Paul was on the way home. His route was by Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, and then to Ephesus. Then he went to Caesarea; from there he went up and greeted the church which means that he went up to see the leaders at Jerusalem; after that he went back to Antioch from which he had started. At Cenchrea he had his head shorn because of a vow. When a Jew specially wished to thank God for some blessing, he took the Nazirite vow. Refer to Numbers 6:1-21. If that vow was carried out in full, it meant that for thirty days, he neither ate meat nor drank wine; and he allowed his hair to grow. At the end of the thirty days, he made certain offerings in the Temple; his head was shorn and the hair was burned on the altar as an offering to God. No doubt Paul was thinking of all God's goodness to him in Corinth and took this vow to show his gratitude.

The story of the Third Missionary Journey begins at Acts 18:23. It began with a tour of Galatia and Phrygia to confirm the brethren there. Paul then moved on to Ephesus where he remained for nearly three years. From there he went to Macedonia; he then crossed over to Troas and proceeded by way of Miletus, Tyre and Caesarea to Jerusalem. Ac 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. The way of the Lord describes Christianity. This shows us that **Christianity means not only believing certain things but putting them into practice. This is our practical walk.**

Apollos came from Alexandria where there were about one million Jews. So strong were they that two out of the five regions into which Alexandria was divided were Jewish. Alexandria was the city of scholars. It was specially the place where scholars believed in the symbolic interpretation of the Old Testament. They believed that the Old Testament record history and every recorded event had an inner meaning. Because of this Apollos was exceedingly useful in convincing the Jews, for he was able to find Christ all over the Old Testament and prove to them that the Old Testament looked forward Jesus' coming. But there was a lack in his training. He knew only the baptism of John. But Apollos must have seen the need for repentance and have recognized Jesus as the Messiah; but as yet he did not know the good news of Jesus as the Savior of men and of the coming of the Holy Spirit in power. By the words of Aquila and Priscilla he was more fully instructed.

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The result was that Apollos, who already knew Jesus as a figure in history, came also to know him as a living person; and his power as a preacher must have been increased a hundredfold. Note what Paul wrote in Corinthians: 1Co 1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: After the apostle Paul's departure in Acts, trouble arose in the assembly and various evils broke out. The membership of this church was a mixed one. Many members had been raised in heathenism. They were surrounded by all the incentives to self-indulgence, practiced on every hand by vain philosophers, and that at this time no part of the New Testament was in circulation. Judaizers had spread error and sown the seeds of opposition. There were considerable carnality and serious things affecting the Christian testimony.

Notice how Paul started his letter to them. He had much more to say of blame than of praise, yet after the opening address and salutation he told them: "I thank my God always on your behalf" (1 Cor. 1:4). Before directly charging them with their disorderly conduct, he first assured them of the place they had in his affections. Though Paul was now absent from them, they held a warm place in his heart. He constantly remembered them before the throne of grace. Paul had a true heart for his people. I thank my God **always** on your behalf. That word always is very blessed especially with the associated circumstances. It points to an important practical lesson for us. There had been various changes in the Corinthian assembly during the Paul's absence, and none of those changes had been for the better. But there had been no alteration or lessening of Paul's affections for them.

There were things that must have dampened his joy, but he had not allowed it to chill his love. He gave thanks for them even though some of them had become cool toward him. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (18:23). Paul longed to have his children grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. He knew that they were weak and had many heathen practices to be delivered from. He knew that Satan and self-seeking religious men would endeavor to ruin them. Therefore, he visited the churches with words of comfort and instruction. He was determined to correct and safeguard the saints of Galatia against that destructive teaching. He wrote one of the most wonderful messages - Grace versus Law - to the Galatians. The phrase in Galatians 1:2, "all the brethren which are with me," together with Acts 20:2-4, where those seven brethren were named, indicate that the apostle wrote that epistle from Corinth on this journey. Thank the Lord for that letter, for most of us were once in Galatia in experience. All Christendom has needed it greatly; for all Christendom has been and is still in bondage, in some measure, to legality.

Key Lessons: from Acts 18

1. **Work and Ministry Can Coexist:** Paul exemplifies the balance between secular work (tentmaking) and spiritual ministry, showing that both can serve God's purpose.
2. **God's Encouragement in Trials:** In the face of opposition, God reassures Paul of His presence and protection, reminding believers to trust in Him during hardships.

3. **Turning Opposition into Opportunity:** Paul's shift to preaching to the Gentiles demonstrates the importance of discerning when to change direction in ministry while remaining faithful to God's call.
4. **Unity in the Gospel:** Aquila and Priscilla's role in teaching Apollos underscores the value of partnership, mentorship, and building up fellow believers for effective ministry.
5. **Faithful Witness Despite Hostility:** Paul's persistence in preaching despite rejection serves as a reminder to persevere in sharing the gospel, trusting that God will work through it.
6. **God's Sovereignty in Difficult Places:** Corinth, known for its immorality, becomes a place where many turn to Christ, demonstrating God's power to transform lives in the darkest of circumstances.
7. **Symbolism of Baptism:** The emphasis on water baptism highlights its role as a public declaration of faith, symbolizing death to sin and new life in Christ.
8. **Impartiality in Leadership:** Gallio's refusal to intervene in religious disputes shows the importance of fairness and neutrality in leadership roles.
9. **Growing as Disciples:** Paul's commitment to strengthening believers reminds us that discipleship involves continuous growth, not just an initial decision to follow Christ.
10. **Humility in Ministry:** Paul and Apollos show humility and submission to God's will, emphasizing that ministry is about serving others and glorifying God, not personal recognition.

Acts 19 Spiritual Battle - January 23, 2025

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Ac 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. This is Paul's third missionary journey and he was here for a while. Now Ephesus was the model church and we will see how it came into existence in Rev 2. It was the first church that was written to in Ephesus. The meaning of the name Ephesus is full purpose and city of the moon. So, we see God's full purpose for the Church here. We find that purpose in the letter and the book of Ephesians. In Ephesians we are taught that we are seated together in the heavens and we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. John's baptism was that of repentance. The baptism of John acknowledged their sins, deserving death and their faith in the one coming. Zacharias prophecy concerning John in Lu 1:76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Lu 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins. This is what John the Baptist's ministry was. They enjoyed the forgiveness of sins and the knowledge of salvation as he believed on the One coming. This was John's baptism. Paul instructed them that Jesus had died and was now resurrected. It was the message that Jesus had come. Ac 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. John the Baptist prophesied concerning Jesus in Lu 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: That was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Ac 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. This was at Ephesus and it is a pattern for us to listen to Paul's Gospel to go on. The meaning of "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" There is no doubt that those disciples had believed on Jesus unto salvation.

Their answer proved that they had not yet received the Spirit. They said, "Nay we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given." Like all believing Jews at that time, they knew that the Spirit had been promised in the Old Testament and should be sent sometime, but they had not learned that the promised had been graciously fulfilled. They had not heard that Pentecost had come. They were thirsting for the fulness of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as soon as they heard from Paul that the promised Messiah Jesus and Holy Spirit had come, they gladly were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus. Apparently, there was something about these disciples that prompted this question from Paul. We don't have any indication that it was his custom to ask people if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Ac 19:7 And all the men were about twelve. 8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. This number 12 is significant and it shows us that the nucleus of the Church at Ephesus was composed of those that had received John's baptism and then when they heard the preaching that Jesus their Messiah had come, they accepted it. The 12 means Divine Governmental Perfection.

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Re 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Then in Re 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had **twelve** gates, and at the gates **twelve** angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the **twelve** tribes of the children of Israel:*** The city had a wall and to gain access, the city had gates. We Gentiles have been grafted in because of Israel. Who are the gates? Israel. They are the **12** gates. Then in Re 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*** It is out of every kindred tongue and nation. We Gentile believers were grafted into this wonderful body of Christ.

Ac 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. ***** Now he is doing this in the synagogue, to the Jews at Ephesus. Ac 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. They now rejected Paul's message. Their hearts were hardened because of unbelief. Where the Gospel was not accepted, Paul did not stay. Ac 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; **so that all they** which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. ***** Here in Ephesus, there were those that rejected the light and hardened their hearts, the same as Israel had done. In our previous lesson in Ac 18:20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;*** At this time the Jews wanted Paul to stay and give them more.

But now in 19:9 they reject and harden their hearts. The rejection of light in the unbeliever, results in harden hearts. The results of receiving the light is separation from darkness and then more light is given. So, Paul separated himself and went to the school of one Tyrannus. He was a Gentile. Again, this tells us of Israel rejecting the Gospel and the Gospel going to the Gentiles. Tyrannus means absolute ruler or sovereign. It speaks of those that would give the word of God its rightful place in our hearts. We give God that absolute rule within our hearts. He is sovereign, He is the word of God. It represents the Gentiles who believe and take in the word. Evidently Tyrannus was a scholar because he had a school there. We see here how God works when the light is given forth and accepted. There are miracles by the hands of Paul. God is showing his approval of the ministry and signs followed. We don't follow the signs but the signs follow them that believe. Mr 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; Ac 19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

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Though a handkerchief or an apron has no magic power, yet when anointed with the mighty power of God in Jesus' name, they were more powerful than all the gods and shrines of the superstitious people in Ephesus. It was the faith in the Gospel that healed. It was by believing and letting the light in. The Gospel today that flows through the Apostle Paul's hands heals us today. It still has deliverance for us today. It isn't the cloth, but it is the faith in the Gospel and standing on that faith in the Gospel that delivers and heals. The diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. These are some of the results of receiving light. It is in the name of Jesus Christ. This was labor in the Gospel and it was magnifying the name of Jesus that brought this healing. Note also, it does not say that Paul did these unusual miracles, but that God worked them by the hands of Paul. Ac 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? This word vagabond means that they were just wandering Jews. They were exorcists. They never took the Gospel in, nor did they accept the Gospel, they just wanted the results. They thought it was some magic. They did not have a personal experience with Jesus. They said, we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. They could be representative of legalizers. They seek to imitate. *** Sceva means mind reader. Paul received revelation and we receive revelation as well. We don't read God's mind, but God reveals the deep things to us by His Holy Spirit. But Sceva is the one that tries to figure out what God is thinking in the natural, but Paul tells us in 1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his **Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.** This is by discernment and revelation given by the Holy Spirit. Sceva was a mind reader, it was not by revelation.

Ac 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. To exercise authority over demons is a matter of discernment. We have as a believer the authority of Christ. Ac 19:17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. *** Something had taken place in their hearts. It was repentance toward God and faith towards Jesus Christ. There was a demonstration of a change in their heart. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. *** These curious arts and books were idolatry. They burned these books and got rid of the art and got rid of their devil worship. And it was costly. How many times have we heard that we could have sold that and put it towards the Church? God doesn't want any part of that. He says burn it. Many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all: The sons of Sceva incident also encouraged Christians to renounce any remaining connection to the demonic. They renounced the demonic by confessing and by burning their magic books, disregarding whatever value they had. It is significant that these practitioners of magic came confessing and telling their deeds.

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It was thought that the power of these magic spells was in their secrecy, which was renounced in the telling. These books and scrolls full of magic charms, and incantations were well known in Ephesus, and they were valuable. The value of fifty thousand pieces of silver today has been estimated at anywhere between \$1 million and \$5 million. Today we have enough temptation in our own mind without going after these things. But many people today still confide in these things. Paul was equipped for the conflict in Ephesus, this city of witchcraft and idolatry; Eph. 6:11. He was equipped with the whole armor of God. Ac 19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The city of Ephesus was the capital of Asia Minor. It was its greatest city and the chief point of trade for that country. Ephesus and Smyrna were termed the eyes of Asia.

It was under the Roman Government, but a free city, and was ruled by its own magistrates. That was the city, which Paul chose as the center of a very effective ministry. History records that the assembly in Ephesus was a very influential one. It is said that Asia Minor became the stronghold of Christianity at one time. The heathen temples were deserted. The animals of sacrifice could not be sold. Apparently, many of the people became Christians. We need not marvel then that Luke says, Ac 19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Paul purposes in His heart to go to Jerusalem. Ac 19:21 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. ***Paul wanted to establish them in the Gospel, this was the gift he wanted to give them. Ro 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; Ac 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. *** Paul stays on in Ephesus and he sent into Macedonia Timothy and Erastus.

Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians and sent it with Timothy and Erastus at this time in the Spring of 56 or 57 AD. We also see in the fall of that year Paul wrote the second epistle to the Corinthians. History states that Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus. Timothy stayed in Ephesus for the remainder of his life, until he was martyred for his faith. Timothy zealously governed the Church until A.D. 97. At this period, as the pagans were about to celebrate a feast called Catagogion, Timothy, meeting the procession, severely reprov'd them for their ridiculous idolatry, which so infuriated the people that they fell upon him with their clubs, and beat him so bad that he died of the bruises two days later. Catagogion, was a heathen festival at Ephesus, celebrated on the 22nd of January, in which the followers ran about the streets, dressed in costumes with clubs in their hands. They also carried images of their gods. They ravished women they met and abused them and often killed the men and committed many other disorders to which the religion of the day gave sanction. It is interesting to note the date, January 22; 22 is the number for light and when men refuse to lay hold of the Lord's truth, then there is a consequence for it. In Revelation He said, I will remove thy candlestick (the light) out of his place. We have seen that down through the ages that if men refuse to listen to the truth or the light that God brings, then there is a removal in one way or another. Timothy was taken from them. They refused the light that he would bring. Paul warned them this would happen in: Ac 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

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Ac 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Notorious for its idolatry and temple to Diana, Ephesus is considered the traditional burial site of Timothy. Ac 19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. (this was is the Christian way) 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; **** Here we see a foreshadow of the 7 years of tribulation. Demetrius, a silversmith made his living by making these idols. Because of V19 , he lost a lot of his business. Ac 19:19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. The Gospel affected the business conditions at Ephesus. Ac 19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. *** They were concerned about their prophet, their money. 26 Moreover 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 be no gods, which are made with hands: *** Paul's Gospel was that there is no God made with men's hands.

Ac 19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*** These leaders of darkness seem to keep the people ignorant. They don't want the Gospel to come in, they want to keep the darkness there because they can make their wealth through it. The Ephesian assembly was a model assembly, but it also had the dishonor of being the great center of devil worship of that day. Ephesus was the center of idolatry of Diana of the Ephesians. Paul said in 1Co 15:32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die. *** Paul is talking about the spiritual battle. Ac 19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

**** Again, we have Paul wrestling with these beasts at Ephesus. **** Paul writes in 1Co 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.*** That word spectacle is theater, in other words he is on show to the rest of the world. Ac 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.*** Some of these people didn't even know why they were there. All they knew is that there was an uproar. Ac 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defense unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*** Alexander's name means man defender and he is ready to make his defense, but he never did because, when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

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Ac 19:35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. 37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

**** Notice God's deliverance was not through those that would get up and have a defense like Alexander, because that is man's way. God's way was to quiet the people through the townclerk.

Ac 19:38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. This Demetrius was the noisy one. The townclerk says, if Paul had broken the law, then let Demetrius get the law on him. Ac 19:39 But if ye enquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

Ac 19:40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly. **** Again we see God comes forth and uses the civil authority. God received the Glory. No one could get and boast and say look what I have done. God delivered Paul from this mass of people. No one, not even Alexander (man defender) could boast and say look what I have done. God delivered Paul from this mass of people and He used the civil authorities to do it. We now find such conditions in Christendom, where religious leaders profit by withholding the truth from the people. There are sheep without a shepherd. One thing I have noticed is that there a lot of churches today that say nice things. There is nothing really wrong with the words, but as you listen more, it doesn't give God the Glory. They subtly have removed the truth or whitewashed it. The foundational message of the Gospel is missing. It is no longer, the Gospel of Christ preached and Him crucified and Him resurrected. But they are giving out methods to achieve this.

There is only one way and it is through faith and in the Gospel presented to us in Christ. In these churches, there is no foundational teaching of Paul's Gospel. 1Co 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; Ro 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**** They have removed Christ's magnification and replaced it with works. These various groups of people in Ephesus who opposed the Gospel are explained by Eph 6:12. And then Paul terms the raging, roaring mob in I Cor. 15:32 as beasts. 1Co 15:32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die. Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Paul was at Ephesus for three years. Ac 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. At Ephesus, this was the greatest opposition which Paul had faced so far. It was filled with Spiritual warfare.

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Ac 20:1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. 2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, 3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. **** Paul had left Ephesus after the uproar had ceased and he went into Macedonia and visits Philippi and Thessalonica. Then he came into Greece or Corinth. Ac 20:4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. *** He probably wrote the book of Galatians somewhere around this period of time. Ga 1:2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: *** All the brethren probably refers to these brothers mentioned here in V 4. Notice he is journeying from Ephesus and he will return to Ephesus. Also, probably the book of Romans was written from Gaius' house here as well. Gaius was from Corinth.

We see that in Ro 16:21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. 22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. 23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. *** These were people that were associated with Paul there at Corinth. Erastus may have been the treasurer of the city. Ac 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. Note this: This is the first example we have of Christians making a practice to gather together on the first day of the week for fellowship and the word of God. They probably gathered in the evening, because Sunday was a normal working day for them. Paul sensed the need to preach for a long time because he was ready to depart the next day. He knew he might never see these particular Christians again. So, he preached for around six hours to them! Ac 20:8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

What kind of lights were these? Oil lamps! 9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. Why has the Holy Spirit put this here for us? Perhaps the combination of the late hour, the heat, and perhaps the fumes from the oil lamps made the young man Eutychus fall asleep. His fall and death certainly would have put a sour note on the meeting. Paul taught for many hours and after a long day of work for most of these people, they were physically tired. Maybe Eutychus fought the sleep the best he could. Poor Eutychus, he was being gradually overcome despite his struggle to remain awake. Yet in the end, sleep got the best of him. **** This is a beautiful picture of Paul's ministry throughout this age. Midnight speaks of the darkest hour in the Church age. This age began at Pentecost and Paul's message still continues; it is long-preaching. It still continues today. There were many lights in the upper chamber and how many chambers were there? There were three lofts and the lights speak of the believers in the upper chamber.

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Compare this with the Ephesians where Paul tells us the church is seated in the heavens. Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*** The Church's blessing is in the heavenlies. It is seated in the upper chamber. Then in Eph 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Christ is seated in the upper chamber in the heavenlies and that is where the Church is seated. Then Eph 2:6 And hath raised us up together, (the Church) and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*** This is where we are seated together in the upper chamber and there are many lights in the upper chamber. Also, the time of year was the Spring time of the year. It was the feast of unleavened bread? Eutycus' name means fortunate or well off, well-to-do. This tells us of the church's condition. Paul's message is going forth and the Church is seated in the heavens. The Church is fortunate, why?

Because there is no persecution and they think, we are well off now. Eutycus fell into a deep sleep. It tells us that drowsiness sets in and the next thing he is asleep and this happened to the Church. The Church has gone to sleep concerning the Gospel. That is a result of lack of attention to their first love. This is what happened to the Church at Ephesus in Rev 2:4, 5. Then he fell from the third loft and was taken up dead. He fell from his place in the heavenlies. And it has happened to the church the same way. In Re 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Ac 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. It is Paul's message that would revive the slumbering Church. It is grace that embraces Eutycus and that is what the grace of God does. There is life in the church still and it is because of God's grace. Grace alone presents us alive and well.

Then there was much comfort to these saints because of the grace of God. Ac 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. 11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, **even till break of day**, so he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted. Ac 20:13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. 14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. The meaning of these names is very interesting. Assos means approaching. Mitylene means purity. Chios means opening. Samos means sandy bluff, full of gravel. Miletus means scarlet. Note the spiritual lessons. These names mean a lot as we would take a journey with Paul. There are six points touched on with Paul's journey from Troas to Ephesus. The first one is Assos and it means approaching or nearer. This tells us of the sinner who is brought near to God and it is grace that is on the lookout for hearts that would draw near to God. As they draw near, they took Paul on board and as we draw near, we take grace on board in our hearts.

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Paul comes on board at Assos. Ac 20:14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. ***Mitylene means purity and it speaks of the purity of our righteousness that we have in Christ. It also talks of the flesh being shortened, in the death of our old man. We must realize that as we take on the grace of God in our lives. We come to this purity and we realize that this purity that we have is on the basis of the righteousness that we have in Christ Jesus. We must realize that we are made righteous in Christ. We also find that we have been crucified with Christ as Paul says in Gal 2:20. When we realize that then we can sail on to our next one. Ac 20:15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. **** Chios means an opening and it speaks of that opening; we find that our righteousness is in Christ and that the old flesh is shortened in the identification with Christ and the death burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We find that there is an opening in the areas of truth and spiritual riches that we have in Christ. God opens up this truth unto us.

The next day they arrived at Samos and it seems that they do not tarry there, they just go by that. The name Samos means sandy bluff. This is not a stopping place for those that are spiritually minded. They tarried at Trogyllium and it means a whole in the ground for preserving food. We tarry there spiritually long enough to get our natural needed supply. We have our natural needs met. Then they went on to Miletus which is an island off of the coast of Asia Minor. Miletus means scarlet and cared for. It is a place for safety and plenty. We realize we have this but it is purchased by the scarlet line or the very blood of Christ. All of these and we get to Ephesus. Ac 20:16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.*** Paul really doesn't want to stay at Ephesus, he wants to sail by. Paul stays on board ship. Ac 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. *** We must remember that the Church of Ephesus is the model Church. He called the elders for instruction and we also in the body of Christ should take the Apostle Paul's instruction.

Ac 20:18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. ****Paul reviews his life of labor and the first point he brings to them is, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. They had been with Paul when he fought the beasts at Ephesus in all seasons of his life.

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There are 11 points of a true shepherd in Vs 18-35

Ac 20:18, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. They had been with Paul when he fought the beasts at Ephesus in all seasons of his life.

Ac 20:19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house. Paul kept back nothing; everything that God gave him, he gave to the Church. He gave them and us the whole Gospel and the whole counsel of God in V 27. He kept back nothing that was profitable to the Church, but he showed them openly. Any way he could do it, he was there from house to house, publicly. Then Ac 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*** Notice Paul's testimony here first repentance toward God. That is first in our lives as John the Baptist taught. Then exercising faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He was our example. Ac 20:22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:***Paul's spirit was bound unto God's Spirit and God's will and he didn't know what would befall him.

Ac 20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. ** This is what awaits him at Jerusalem. Paul said, to follow Christ is a suffering way. 2Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Ac 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*** The sufferings and the bonds don't move me nor will they deter him, so that he might finish his course with joy. Paul says in Php 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. **The joy he had was the ministry that he had, the saints that he ministered to.** It was the love of the brethren that was motivating Paul to go on to share the love of Jesus with others. Ac 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. *** He knew he would not come this way again. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. He was obedient to the Lord in bringing the message to the people. In Ezek 33:9 tells us of the watchman, that he if he saw a danger there and if he didn't warn the people that their blood would be on his hands, but if warned them and they did not listen then their blood would not be upon him. Paul's testimony was that he was freed from the blood of all men why? **Because he had given them the Gospel.** He told them the way. He was indeed a watchman. He was obedient to the Lord's calling.

The reason is in V27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Paul has given us the whole counsel of God. **Now he says this to the elders.** Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, **to feed the church of God, which he (Jesus) hath purchased with his own blood.** *** Take heed, it is now your responsibility, you are the elders of this Church. There are 3 ways to take heed, **feed the Church of God. It is God's Church and not the elders.** He purchased it with His own blood. Ac 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

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30 Also **of your own selves** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Wolves come in from the outside who pretend to be shepherds and fleece the flock. **Then V30 they even come from within.** Ac 20:31 Therefore watch, (be awake) and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to **warn every one night and day with tears.** Paul was with them at Ephesus for three years. Ac 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*** This is how we are to feed the sheep. The food for the sheep is **the word of His grace.** Why? It is Jesus the whole truth! Why? Because that is what is able to build us up and give us our inheritance. Our inheritance is to rule and reign with Christ. It is win God's best, to grow up into Christ. 2Ti 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. What inheritance will we have if we reject this? If we are just a part of a community country club. How much of the word of His grace is preached? What are we settling for? How much of the word of His grace have we taken in? What we have laid hold of; that is the degree of our inheritance. We must lay hold of it. God has provided it for us. Are we saying to the Lord, Oh I believe you , but I am going to compromise over here. We neglect the hand of God that He is holding out to us.

Remember what John said in Revelation when men refuse to lay hold of the light of Lord's truth, then there is a consequence for it. In Revelation He said, I will remove thy candlestick (the light) out of his place. Re 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and **will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.** We have seen that down through the ages that if men refuse to listen to the truth or the light of God's word that God brings, then there is a removal in one way or another. Timothy was taken from them. They refused the light that he would bring. Paul warned them this would happen. The Lord Jesus has provided everything we need. For example: if Jesus hands you a cup (the light) that is full and you turn it down because you want to be in a place that just gives you good feelings, but the word is not taught, what are you turning down. You are throwing that cup in the face of the Lord that the Lord has provided for you. It is everything you'll ever need. Walking with the Lord like Abraham did; where he was asked him to give up things all along the journey of his life; and then he was asked to give up his everything in Isaac;

Give up everything for the future that was promised him in this seed. In Abraham's mind he must of felt that the future generations would be gone forever. It was in the promised seed of Isaac that all could be lost. But when Abraham gave the last thing he had to God, he gained everything that he could ever have possibly desire. The picture I would like to draw is this: Think of yourself traveling through a wasteland, dry, dusting; no water to drink ,dying of thirst. You gave up everything to walk on this journey. You are walking and walking and a voice somehow deep inside tells you to continue walking and finally after years and years of traveling through this waste howling wilderness, you come to an opening through a rock. You climb and climb and you finally get to the other side and there it is, fields and fields of fruit trees and water and every kind of thing you would ever want to eat. Today, people are making choices which are good things; some respectable things; some worthwhile causes for their families, but all the while the Lord is offering His open arms of a vast wealth. But to get it; it will cost you everything you have, but

after all, Jesus and the Father gave us everything they had; but when we decide that His everything is good enough for me, I will gladly give Him my everything to Him.

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Because I know that my everything will be given back to me because My Lord's treasure for me is beyond my comprehension. Once I turn loose of me, I will gain everything of His. That is the friend of God. Let's compare which friend we want to be.

Do we want to be this kind of friend, in Jas 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the **friendship of the world is enmity with God**? whosoever therefore will be a **friend** of the world is the enemy of God. Or do we want to be this friend. Jas 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and **he was called the Friend of God**. Jesus said this: Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Jesus did that for me! He laid down His life for me. I want to be His friend. How can I not freely give Him everything to gain everything He has for me; no matter the cost. Could it be after waiting twenty-five long years that God would allow me to have everything, that He desire for me, or would it take a lifetime of waiting? Or then, would it be after hope and hope again, to the highest point, that I have some reprieve to find that I have not yet arrived. Probably Abraham thought that when Isaac was born his trials were at an end; if so, he was greatly mistaken. But then if I was asked to sacrifice more for His name sake, what would be my answer to gain the cup that he has held out to me and more than that that He has for me.

Still, what a true shepherd in Paul that we can follow. For He said follow me as I follow Christ. Paul knew he would not see them much longer, so he commends them to God. It was God that was going to keep the Church and to the word of His grace. Ac 20:33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ac 20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. *** Paul fed himself and those that were with him with his own hands. Ac 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Ac 20:36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Tonight's Comments

Key Lessons from Acts 20:

1. **Encouragement is Essential in Christian Leadership** – Paul consistently strengthened and encouraged believers wherever he traveled, reminding us of the power of building others up in faith.
2. **God's Word Should Be the Focus of Worship and Fellowship** – The gathering in Troas illustrates that early Christians prioritized Scripture and teaching, even sacrificing sleep for it.
3. **Spiritual Vigilance is Necessary** – Eutychus falling asleep and nearly dying serves as a metaphor for spiritual drowsiness. Believers must remain awake and attentive to the Gospel to avoid spiritual downfall.

4. **God's Grace Revives and Sustains** – Eutychus' revival represents God's grace in restoring those who have spiritually fallen. Even when the Church faces spiritual fatigue, God's grace remains sufficient.
5. **Faithfulness in Ministry Requires Sacrifice** – Paul's tireless dedication, suffering, and selflessness in preaching the Gospel show that true ministry involves personal sacrifice.
6. **Watch Out for False Teachers** – Paul warns that false teachers will rise both from outside and within the Church, emphasizing the need for discernment and strong biblical foundations.
7. **A True Leader Serves with Humility and Integrity** – Paul lived as an example of selflessness, humility, and dedication to God's work, prioritizing service over personal gain.
8. **Giving is More Blessed Than Receiving** – Paul reminds the elders of Jesus' words, emphasizing generosity, selflessness, and supporting those in need.
9. **The Christian Journey Involves Challenges but Also God's Guidance** – Paul acknowledges that suffering and trials await him, but he remains committed to finishing his mission with joy.

Embrace God's Call, No Matter the Cost – Paul's farewell shows his unwavering commitment to God's mission, even at great personal risk. Like Paul, believers should focus on fulfilling God's calling rather than seeking comfort or safety

Acts 21 February 6, 20225

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Paul has left Ephesus and he is on his way to Jerusalem. Ac 21:1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: 2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. 3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.*** They landed in Syria at Tyre. Paul represents the Gospel. This tells of where the Gospel stopped. It didn't stop at these other places, but it stopped at Tyre. They stopped here for 7 days. Tyre means to distress. It tells us if we are in distress, Paul's Gospel will minister to us in that place. It is a place where the Gospel finds fruit. Ac 21:4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, **that he should not go up to Jerusalem.** *** This is a second witness that Paul was to be bound at Jerusalem. Paul was on his racecourse, and he said none of these things move me in our previous study in Acts 20:24. He knew God's will.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed. 6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. Ac 21:7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. 8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. Ac 21:9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. It's interesting that with these four daughters who had the gift of prophecy, none of them seemed to tell Paul anything about what he would encounter in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit could have used them, but He chose to use someone else. Ac 21:10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. His name means grasshopper. He gives the following prophesy;

Ac 21:11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Notice this is the third witness that God gave to Paul concerning what would happen to him at Jerusalem. Paul's girdle may have been a belt or sash that held together his robe. The girdle was a symbol of strength and power (Job 12:18 Job 12:21; 30:11; Isaiah 22:21; 45:5). Righteousness and faithfulness are the girdle of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 11:5). Girdles were used as purses or pockets. Matthew 10:9; also Mark 6:8. Ac 21:12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done.

Some times we don't understand what the Holy Spirit is doing, but we must allow the Holy Spirit to work the same answer in us. The will of the Lord be done. Ac 21:15 And after those days we took up our carriages and went up to Jerusalem.

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16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. 17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. **** Mnason means the number is safe. Cyprus means love and it also means a blossom. This tells us here of that faithful remnant that will take and lodge in the Gospel. The number is safe, and it is on the basis of God's blossom of love. In Ac 20:16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. *** He wanted to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost and he wanted to give them the Gospel of God's grace. 17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. This is what Paul did, he took up an offering in Corinth for the saints at Jerusalem. This was another one of Paul's purposes to go to Jerusalem. V. 17 tells us that they still had good fellowship with the saints of Jerusalem. They received them gladly.

Although the brethren (Acts 15) had agreed with Paul that the Gentile believers should not be put under the yoke of the law, yet these believers themselves were still under the ceremonial law? 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: *** There is almost a, "yes but" Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law. The saints at Jerusalem had a problem and they could not throw off the old rituals of the law. **This is the same assembly that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews to.** Ac 21:18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

Ac 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. **They were informed about Paul that he taught all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses:** Here we go again. They accuse Paul. Theses were false rumors about Paul from the Christian community at Jerusalem. They were hearing that Paul had become anti-Jewish and told Jewish Christians that it was wrong for them to continue in Jewish laws and customs. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. *** Paul never teaches to forsake Moses law, but he does teach that Christ was the living substance and that Jesus Christ fulfilled the whole law. What Moses did was only a shadow. That is Paul's message today. Heb 7:24 But this man, (Jesus) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he (Jesus) is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. **** We have Christ as our high priest that we can come to.

Ac 21:23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. They advised Paul to join and sponsor these four Christians from a Jewish backgrounds.

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Four men who have taken a vow: The particular vow of consecration was probably similar to Paul's Nazirite vow mentioned in Acts 18:18-21. That all may know: The Jerusalem elders believed this would convince everyone that Paul did not preach against Jewish laws and customs. They wanted Paul to prove he was not against the law of Moses. Paul agreed to do this, to demonstrate that he never taught Christian Jews to forsake Moses. They were never required to ignore Jewish customs, as he had been falsely accused by some among the Jerusalem Christians. But concerning the Gentiles who believe: The Jerusalem elders understood that this had nothing to do with Gentiles who believe in Jesus. It didn't mean that they had to perform any Jewish rituals to be right with God. Paul refused to compromise the truth of the Gospel. And we should not compromise the truth either. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

****A vow was given long before the law was given in Ge 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on. A vow did not come by the Mosaic Law. A vow was regulated by the law according to Leviticus. A vow was entirely voluntary but once made, it was required or enforced. A vow is a promise or a petition to have God do a certain thing or to grant a request. The responsibility is solely on the one making the vow. Then they said 24 Take them, and purify thyself with them. **** Purification deals with un-cleanliness. It is symbolic of regeneration or the new birth where we were washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. Then they said, and be at charges with them; in other words, they wanted Paul to pay the temple tax. Then that they would shave their heads. Shaving of the head is symbolic of separation and subjection or weakness. **** Paul was willing to enter into this because he was a gracious saint and not under the law.

13. How could Paul do this without putting himself under the law? (bondage)? He said in 1Co 9:19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Paul was willing to enter into this that he might gain them to the Gospel. ****We are not under the law but we are not lawless either. Owe no anything; some try to say that this is talking about monetary debt. That isn't what it is saying. But love is the fulfilling of the law. Ac 21:25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Ac 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. 27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him. This does not mean that Paul comprised the truth. He never did that. But this mob was still against Paul.

Vs 27-30, now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore, he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.

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For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. The charges against Paul in V28 were like the charges Stephen was executed for Acts 6:13. Paul was over that execution; now he is accused in a similar way. The crowd was large because it was feast-time. They believed Paul not only preached against the people, the law, and the temple, but also violated the temple by bringing Gentiles into its inner courts. They said, he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place. It was Trophimus the Ephesian... whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple: It was absolutely prohibited for Gentiles to go beyond the designated Court of the Gentiles in the temple grounds. Signs were posted which read (in both Greek and Latin): No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the temple and enclosure. Anyone who is caught trespassing will bear personal responsibility for his resulting death. The Romans were so sensitive to this that they authorized the Jews to execute anyone that offended this, even if the offender was a Roman citizen.

(V31-36) The Roman soldiers rescue Paul. Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came near and took him and commanded that Paul be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when the commander could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the multitude of the people followed, crying out, away with him!

Paul had been apprehended by an angry mob, and the mob didn't just want to take him out of the temple courts. They wanted to kill him, right there in the outer courtyard area of the temple mount. Paul had been near death because of the attacks of murderous mobs before in Acts 14:5, 19, and he must have thought, Here we go again! **News came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar:** From the Tower of Antonia, at the northwest corner of the temple mount, more than 500 Roman soldiers were stationed only two flights of stairs from the Court of the Gentiles. **When they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul:** The Romans didn't sympathize with Paul, but they were interested in keeping public order, so they arrested Paul both for his own protection and to stop the uproar of the mob. **Two chains** mean Paul was handcuffed to a soldier on either side. Paul must have immediately remembered the prophecy of Agabus V11. When the mob cried out for his death, Paul must have remembered when he was part of such a mob, agreeing with the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 7:54.

Maybe it even reminded him of the trial of Jesus when they shouted Away with him! **Away with him** did not mean, take him away from the temple area. They meant, remove him from the earth. They wanted him dead. V 37-39 Paul speaks to the Roman commander. Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, May I speak to you? He replied, Can you speak Greek?

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Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness? Paul said, I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people. **The Egyptian** who they thought Paul was had led an army of four thousand men to the Mount of Olives where they declared they would take over the temple mount. Roman soldiers had quickly scattered them, but the leader got away. When Paul identified himself to the Roman commander, it put him in an entirely different standing. He was a citizen of **Tarsus**, not a suspected terrorist. **I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.** At this moment, when his life was in danger from an angry mob and he was suspected of being a dangerous criminal, Paul had one thing on his mind: **Let me preach the gospel!** It's amazing that Paul could think and speak so clearly, considering that he had just been beaten. Consider the power of the Holy Spirit to enable Paul to speak and Paul's great passion. V40 Paul is permitted to address the mob that wanted to kill him. So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people.

And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language. Acts 22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. 2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) 3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. This was the opportunity that Paul had waited a long time for. He had an incredible passion for the salvation of his fellow Jews (refer Romans 9:1-5). Note the similarities between Jesus and Paul as shown in Acts 20 and 21: Like Jesus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem with a group of disciples. Like Jesus, Paul had opposition from hostile Jews who plotted against his life. Like Jesus, Paul made or received three successive predictions of his coming sufferings in Jerusalem, including being handed over to the Gentiles. Like Jesus, Paul had followers who tried to discourage him from going to Jerusalem and the fate that awaited him there. Like Jesus, Paul declared his readiness to lay down his life.

Like Jesus, Paul was determined to complete his ministry and not be deflected from it. Like Jesus, Paul expressed his abandonment to the will of God. Like Jesus, Paul came to Jerusalem to give something. Like Jesus, Paul was unjustly arrested on the basis of a false accusation. Like Jesus, Paul alone was arrested, but none of his companions. Like Jesus, Paul heard the mob crying out, away with him! Like Jesus, the Roman officer handling Paul's case and did not know his true identity. Like Jesus, Paul was associated with terrorists by a Roman official. In a way unique to most of us, **Paul really did know the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death Phil 3:10.** Paul's call and ministry make these similarities very striking, **but Paul was not crucified for us; Jesus Christ was and he was the only one that went through that horrible time on the cross. But the Holy saw fit to write this about Paul: 1Cor 11:1 Be ye followers of me (Paul), even as I also am of Christ.** We shouldn't be surprised when events in our lives are like events in Paul's and Jesus' life. There may be a time of testing and a time when people come to us with needs that only God can meet; It may be a time when we seem at the mercy of a storm; or a time when we must cry out to God by ourselves only; or a time when we must simply lay down our lives and trust God to gloriously raise us up. Afterall, we, like Paul, are to be conformed to the image of His Son; Romans 8:29.

Acts 22. February 13, 2025

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Ac 22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. 2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) At the end of the previous chapter, Paul's audience for this sermon had just tried to kill him, thinking that he had profaned the temple by sneaking a Gentile in past the Court of the Gentiles. 3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. Paul spoke as a Jew unto Jews. He was careful to lay the common ground between them. With this, Paul began telling the story of his life before Jesus Christ and then his conversion. Luke told the story of Paul's conversion in Acts 9. After that, Paul told the story in some way at least four more times in the New Testament, each with its own intention. Acts 22 Telling the story to persuade the Jews.

Acts 26 Telling the story to persuade the Gentiles. Philippians 3 Telling the story for theological understanding. 1 Timothy 1 Telling the story to give encouragement. Born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel: Paul noted that though he was born outside of the Promised Land, he was brought up in Jerusalem, and at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most prestigious rabbis of that day. In Ac 5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; As Paul stated in another place, he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee in Philippians 3:5. To the smallest detail, Paul kept the law as understood by the spiritual elite of his day. He was zealous toward God. It's as if Paul searched for the nicest thing he could say about a mob that had just tried to murder him. He said, I can say that you are zealous toward God. He gained their attention by speaking in their Hebrew language.

Ac 22:2 And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith. He presented 4 facts to them. Act 22: 3; **#1 fact**; I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, **#2 Fact**; yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, **#3 fact**; and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, **#4 fact**; and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. Ac 22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 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 went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.*** Paul had persecuted this way unto death which speaks of zeal without knowledge. The high priest saw Paul's life before his conversion. He states that the high priest bore witness to the fact that Paul had persecuted this way unto death. These are the same high priest and elders of Israel that bear witness of Paul and his life before his conversion. This is the same council that had Jesus before them and Peter and they were not strangers to what Paul taught.

Paul had received letters under their authority to bring those to Jerusalem to be punished. Paul was so energetic as a persecutor that he, in some cases, was responsible for the death of some followers of Jesus. Paul communicated to the crowd, you tried to kill me, but I succeeded in killing many. This had to be surprising news to many in the crowd.

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Paul did this persecution with the official approval of the religious leaders. Paul was telling this crowd that he understood why they have attacked him. He was once an attacker also. He understood where they were coming from. Paul had been a Christian for more than twenty years now, but could still relate to those who were not Christians. Ac 22:6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. In chapter 9 we see Luke's version and in Acts 22 we see Paul's version and he gives more detail because it is his testimony of his conversion. There are some things that Paul emphasizes more. Paul also gives a testimony in Acts 26:12-19 before King Agrippa. Here in chapter 22, he tells how the Lord appeared to him in Damascus.

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. Paul was saying, I was just like you all, until I had an encounter with Jesus. Jesus met me and my life was dramatically changed. 10 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. 11 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. ****The brightness of that light made Paul blind. In persecuting Jesus, he was spiritually blind, and then he was also physically blind. He had to be humbly led by the hand into the city of Damascus. In verses 14-16 we a little more than what was in Luke's account in Acts 9. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

Paul wanted them to know that he still served the God of his fathers. He had not rejected Judaism. Instead, many in Judaism had rejected God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. This is a wonderful word of every one before God: To know His will, to see the Just One (Jesus), and to hear the voice of His mouth (His word). 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. *****Paul omits here that He is filled with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Paul did not emphasize this at this time. V 15 and 16 were not told in Luke's account in Chapter 9. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

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He calls him brother because Paul was converted to Christ there on the road to Damascus. Ac 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, (Christ) and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. *** Jesus Christ gave Paul that revelation of the word of God. Ac 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. Paul was to be a witness unto all men and we should be as well. Ac 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*** This doesn't mean that baptism is required in order to be saved because we see that earlier Ananias called him brother Saul, but Paul is talking about the separation that comes once we are saved. When we submit to this ordinance of baptism there is a separation that comes. Baptism in water is bold statement of repentance and it meant to a Jew an eternal cutting off from the ceremonies of the Old Covenant. It meant that when they submitted to baptism, all the types and shadows were fulfilled and now they are the new creation in Christ. It was an acknowledgement that all was fulfilled in the despised Nazarene whom they had crucified. They had crucified their Messiah.

*** Then notice washing away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. This is really what water baptism is symbolic of, the washing away thy sins. Note Paul's sight was restored before baptism. 1Cor 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Paul wasn't sent to baptize. Some say that water baptism is essential for salvation, but that is not true. What that does is push the truth of water baptism beyond its proper limit. If they say water baptism is essential, it exalts water baptism as the savior and it is not. Water baptism is symbolic of our identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Paul relates another vision here in these verses of the trance he was in. Act 22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. Paul told them about something that happened about 20 years before, when he had been a follower of Jesus for 2 or 3 years. Even though he had been a Christian for a few years, yet he still came to Jerusalem to pray in the temple. He wanted the crowd to know that even though he trusted in Jesus, he was not against all Jewish ceremonies and rituals. He was in a trance and saw Jesus saying to me: Paul had an impressive vision of Jesus while in the temple; yet he never referred to this vision in his letters, and seems to only mention it now out of necessity. Paul's Christian life was founded on God's truth, not spiritual experiences, and he didn't even like to talk a lot about his spiritual experiences. He was told to make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me (Jesus): This word from Jesus probably was a surprise to Paul. With good reason, he probably thought of himself as the perfect one to bring the Gospel to his fellow Jews.

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Nevertheless, Jesus gave him this warning, even telling him to make haste. Ac 22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.*** They (Israel) gave Paul audience until he said Gentiles and then they wanted nothing to do with him. Here we see the hardness of their heart and hatred towards Jesus Christ. **** The message of Jesus that both Paul and the New Testament preached is this: You may come to God just as you are Jew, Gentile, foreigner, high, low, rich, or poor, but you must come to Him through Jesus Christ. They were ready to stone and kill Paul. Then the Centurion takes charge and this is the same the chief captain. This is the Lord's deliverance for Paul through the civil authorities and the Roman Government. They questioned Paul by beating him. From now until the end of the Book of Acts, Paul will be in Roman custody. As far as this book is concerned, this was the end of his time as a free man, though not the end of his witness or his usefulness to God and God's people.*** Paul knew the law and he brought out that his nationality was Jewish, but his citizenship was Roman.

They could not scourge a Roman that was uncondemned. Ac 22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, 24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. *** Again Paul was claiming his citizenship. Ac 22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.*** Even bounding Paul was against Roman law because he was uncondemned. Ac 22:30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Ac 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. *** The opportunity to preach to the mob on the temple mount ended in another riot, but he was able to speak before the Sanhedrin council the next day. The Sanhedrin was the Jewish congress or parliament. Paul was given the opportunity to speak before the group that he was once a member of. Acts 26:10 clearly says that Paul had a vote in the Sanhedrin. Paul welcomed this opportunity of a lifetime, to preach to those he loved so much and knew so well. God had revealed a plan to Paul right at his conversion. Paul was a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name the Lord said, before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake Acts 9:15-16. Paul knew the general plan; but just like us, he didn't know how it would all work out. He had to trust God, just like every believer.

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What does Acts 22 mean for us?

Acts 22 is significant for Christians today because it provides a powerful example of sharing our personal conversion story, demonstrating how a radical transformation through faith in Jesus Christ can change a person's life like it did the Apostle Paul's life. Even if we were previously actively opposed to Christianity, as seen through the Apostle Paul's experience of persecution followed by his dedication to spreading the Gospel. This chapter tells us of the importance of boldly proclaiming our faith despite potential opposition and challenges. We can learn from Paul's courage in sharing his personal testimony, and his own journey of faith and the impact of Jesus on his life.

This chapter shows how Paul, facing hostility from others, he remained steadfast in his belief and continued to preach the Gospel, illustrating the importance of perseverance in the face of challenges. Paul shows us that God not only forgives us of our sin, but He also remembers them no more! If God is willing to move on and put our sins behind us, we should be willing to do the same. Paul notes that his conversion was wholly the **act of God**. And our conversion is no different; it was an act of God. We can never forget that. Condemned sinners are struck blind by the power of darkness, and it is a lasting blindness if people choose to remain in that condition.

But we believers never, no never, will experience that condition ever again. We have been redeemed and bought with the price by the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

I think the key verse of this chapter is: Ac 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. There are three things said in this verse. **God has chosen us! To Know His will! And to hear His voice through the word of God!**

I believe Paul's prayer for us would be something like this: Father, I want my life to bless others, and lead them to Jesus as Lord, and awaken them to your call in their lives. Please open my eyes to see those who are searching for Jesus, open my heart to love them, and open my mouth to share the right things to bless them. In Jesus' name, I ask for this grace. Amen.

Acts 23. February 20, 2025

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Ac 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. Then Paul with courtesy replied, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." The apostle no longer recognized Ananias as the high priest, because his priesthood had ended when Christ's priesthood began. Jesus Christ was the only real High Priest. They were speaking evil of Him, God's acknowledged Ruler of the people. Smiting Paul was equivalent to smiting Christ, for Paul was His representative. They brought Paul to the Sanhedrin council. There were 70 members on this council and one high priest and the total was 71. They were in charge of Jewish law but there were certain things that they could not do. The Romans would not let them put anyone to death. Execution was the Roman means, they crucified our Lord. The Jew's means was to stone a person.

Paul brought out his defense immediately before the council in v1. Ac 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*** That should be our testimony also. Sometimes we are falsely accused and we must also say we have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. God is the one that is our judge. ****These Jews were the ones that had broken the law for they had smitten Paul contrary to the law. Ac 23:2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. What did Paul mean by the whited wall? **** Jesus spoke in Mt 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.***The sepulchers is where they put their dead bodies and people would paint the walls white but inside it was filled with dead men's bones and that is what Paul was telling this high priest that outwardly you look so righteously and pious sitting in that chair, but you are a whited wall. But inside you are filled with dead men's bones. A whited wall covers the dirt.

The dirt is still there. That is what the law did, it couldn't change the inside of a man; it didn't change his heart. So outwardly he looked clean but inwardly he was wicked. People today look at the outward things of a man and admire their righteousness and pious living. Paul knew what this priest was a whited wall. Paul told him by smiting him he broke the law. He was smitten contrary to the law. Paul knew that God no longer recognized Ananias as the high priest because God was finished with their priesthood. Their priesthood was ended when Christ begun His. We see that in Hebrews where the Aaronic priesthood is over and now Jesus is our High Priest. Heb 7:21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

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25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. Ac 23:6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, **I am** a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead **I am** called in question. Then a division arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees, because of Paul's declaration of his hope of the resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, though they were supposed to be orthodox Jews. 7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. ***** It is interesting in these verses Paul brings out their natural distrust for one another in this council. There were 2 sects within this council. The first one we see is the Pharisee and the word Pharisee means, the separated. It indicates a separation from the Israelites as well as the Gentiles. They were separated from Jews and Gentiles. Christ denounced them severely in Matthew 15 because of their tradition adding to the law. They added to the law and called it an oral or a second law. Their power and influence was their popularity with the people. They were very frugal and not given over to luxury. Then the second sect is the Sadducees. They are called the righteous. The high priest belonged to this sect. They were small in numbers but they were the wealthiest. They had more influence on the Sanhedrin because of their wealth. They held to the written law as obligatory to the nation Israel.

They rejected the oral law of the Pharisees. The Sanhedrin was a Jewish ruling council, and the Pharisees were a religious group that served in the Sanhedrin. Because of what Paul said to the Sanhedrin council which is made up of two sects. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were divided. Ac 23:6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, **I am** a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead **I am** called in question. The center of Paul's gospel was a resurrected Jesus. He was being judged over the matter of the resurrection of the dead. 7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. Paul gained the Pharisees as an ally, and he let them argue it out with the Sadducees.

The Pharisees stood up for Paul because he was one them. Ac 23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

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But the Sadducees, Ac 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. The Sadducees did not believe in angels or spirits but the Pharisee believed in them. So, there was a great contention that rose among them. **** We also see Jesus stood by Paul in Ac 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. He said be of good cheer. We see in the next verse why Jesus told Paul this. Paul needed those comforting words, for the enemy was plotting his death. How good and wonderful it is that the Lord knows all that men are doing. He goes before us and He is also our reward. Ac 23:12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Over 40 bloodthirsty men banded together under a great curse, to eat nothing until they had slain him.

Notices how the Sadducees and the Pharisees came against Jesus in Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. We must note this in in Acts 23: 9 the Pharisees said let us not fight against God. In Ro 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. *** Just because men say that they believe God does bring them into the courts of heaven.

But it is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing that He is the one that saves men's souls. It is not just acknowledging that God is there. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation. It is the confession of what we believe and these men did not do that at all. ****It is one thing when we preach a message and some do not agree or accept it but with Paul they did not receive his message and they wanted to stone and kill him, so no doubt he was a little discouraged. So, the Lord stood by him and encouraged him. After all he was human and was a little discouraged. The Holy Spirit directed Paul in the direction of Rome because Jesus had told him, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. It was the leading of the Holy Spirit that Paul came to Jerusalem in the first place, but how was the Holy Spirit directing Paul to Rome? It was by imprisonment. Paul you are going to go to prison. To give you a picture of the prisons that Paul was in during his time; they were filthy, dark, and poorly ventilated. They were also overcrowded, cold, and lacked basic amenities. Most cells were dark, especially the inner cells. The prisons were cold and lacked water. The prisons were smelly due to a lack of toilets. Prisoners were chained in painful leg or wrist chains. Prisoners were not given replacement clothing, even in the winter.

Paul spent two years in prison in Caesarea at this time. This period is detailed in Acts 23:34-35, where it mentions that the Roman governor kept Paul under guard in Herod's palace. This prison was so bad that many prisoners begged for a speedy death and others simply committed suicide.

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Ac 23:12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. *** I wonder if they ever did starve to death. I bet that was one vow that they broke. 40 the number for testing. Israel was tested of their attitude of the Gospel. They were given the Gospel and they were tested and it showed their hardness of heart. They are without excuse. Ac 23:14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. *** Israel has starved themselves spiritually and they have not eaten of the Gospel that was supplied to them. They have been spiritually starving ever since. Ac 23:15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you tomorrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. Though these men bound themselves by an oath to kill Paul, God stopped their plans.

**** Sometimes God uses natural ways to give Paul his freedom and kept him on his course. This was as much a miracle as an earthquake in our previous study in Acts. Ac 23:16 And when Paul's sister's son (nephew) heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. 19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? 20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul tomorrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly. 21 But do not thou yield unto them: for they lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

Ac 23:22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me. 23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; 24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. 25 And he wrote a letter after this manner: ***** God sure took care of Paul look at all those men to protect him wow! The captain dispatched the apostle Paul by night to Caesarea by means of 200 soldiers, 200 spearmen and 70 cavalymen. They took him directly to Felix the governor. The captain also gave a letter to him concerning Paul and the Jews' attitude toward him. Paul was aware of the difficulties that awaited him in his service to Christ and his gospel, and was willing even to be martyred. This reminds of the verse that Paul wrote in 1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. You think of all that Paul had to bear that we might have this wonder Gospel!

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****Then Claudius wrote a letter to Felix and he said that he didn't find anything that Paul did was worthy of death. Ac 23:26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. 27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. 28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore, they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: 29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.*** This is another example of how God used the civil authorities to protect Paul. You might think that things are bad right now, but you may not even know the half of it. But Jesus knows, and he still says to us, "be of good cheer." Why? Not because everything is fine; but because God is still on His throne, and He still holds to His promise that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose Romans 8:28.

Note that "Be of good cheer," is only one word in the Greek, and is used five times in the New Testament; each time by Jesus Christ. Five is the number for Grace! Wonderful Grace! They are: Mt 9:2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, **be of good cheer**; thy sins be forgiven thee. Mt 9:22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, **be of good comfort**; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. Mt 14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, **Be of good cheer**; it is I; be not afraid. Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but **be of good cheer**; I have overcome the world. Ac 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, **Be of good cheer**, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. Ac 23:31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: The 200 soldiers only went as far as Antipatris because the most dangerous part of the road was only up to this point. The country was dangerous and inhabited by Jews. Antipatris was about 28 miles; it was open and flat, and unsuited for any ambush and largely inhabited by Gentiles. 33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. 34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; 35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall. *** Paul is now at the official residence of Herod. Again, Paul is on his way to Rome. This would be Paul's first opportunity to speak to someone at this level of authority (the governor). This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise made to Paul some 20 years earlier: that he would bear the name of Jesus to kings in Acts 9:15. This city of Antipatris was built by Herod the Great, and called by this name in honor of his father, Antipater. It lay between Caesarea and Lydda, two miles inland, on the great Roman road from Caesarea to Jerusalem. This began a two-year period in prison for Paul in Caesarea. After that he spent at least two years in Rome. With travel time, the next five years of Paul's life were lived in Roman custody. Paul lived many years with great freedom, and had to trust the promises of God through those years.

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How does this relate to us? Paul also had to trust the promises of Jesus Christ in his years of little freedom. He knew and trusted that God could work just as powerfully through those more difficult circumstances. Paul received the promise of Jesus. It was promises from 20 years before, and promises recently made He received them with confident faith, allowing those promises to make a difference in how he thought and even felt. Every believer must do the same. Paul wrote in 2Co 4:17 For **our** light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; He says our light affliction. How could this be a light affliction for Paul? *** Paul is speaking of this in terms of eternity. What a statement from Paul, a man who suffered such tremendous things, and then he says, which are but for a moment. These light afflictions and adversities worketh for us; we have to look upon them as our servants. They are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Far more exceeding means a throwing beyond into a throwing beyond.

If you throw it out there just as far as you possibly can and then into another throwing beyond. It tells of the extreme extension in so far as the work that God is doing. This means we can't even comprehend the wealth or the vast of glory that he is talking about which is eternal. Paul did not lose one thing for it was a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The grace that was given to the Apostle Paul in the midst of all these adversities. 2Co 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many **redound (or super abound)** to the glory of God. This abundant grace and the deliverance that God brought, might through the thanksgiving of many super abound to the glory of God.

So, what are we to focus on, if we desire these trials to work for us as servants? Things not seen, that which is eternal. 2Co 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*** This is where Hebrews 11:1 comes in. Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. *** When we are not looking at the things that are seen we look by faith to the things that are not seen. It is so easy to look at the things that are seen; all of the adversities and troubles and trials and everything that is wrong; now we just don't look away and ignore these things around us, but we cannot look upon them extensively. We cannot be obsessed with them. We look not at the things which are seen, but by faith we look at the things which are not seen. That means we must be obsessed with the things of faith just like what we saw in our study in Genesis of Abraham, the father of faith.

Tonight's Comments:

Key Lessons from Acts 23

1. God's Protection – God watches over His people, using both divine intervention and practical means to safeguard His plans.
2. Trust in God's Promises – Even when facing trials, trust that God will fulfill His promises in His perfect timing.
3. Wisdom in Adversity – Like Paul, use discernment and wisdom to navigate difficult situations rather than reacting emotionally.
4. Trials Have Purpose – Hardships are temporary and serve a greater purpose in God's plan (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

5. Faith Over Fear – Jesus’ words, “Be of good cheer” (Acts 23:11), remind us to trust Him, even in challenges.
6. The Gospel Advances Through Opposition – Difficulties can be opportunities to spread God’s message.
7. God Uses Unlikely People – Even Paul’s Roman captors played a role in protecting him, showing that God works in unexpected ways.
8. Focus on Eternity – Don’t be consumed by temporary struggles; keep your eyes on God’s eternal purpose (2 Corinthians 4:18).
9. Encouragement Comes from Christ – In our lowest moments, Jesus is with us, offering strength and direction.

This chapter teaches us to trust God, remain faithful in trials, and see difficulties as part of His greater plan.

Acts 24 -25; February 27, 2025

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Ac 24:1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. 2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Ananias the high priest came down from Jerusalem and he brought down an orator or an eloquent speaker named Tertullus. Tertullus means triple hardened. He was a skilled lawyer. It tells us of the condition of Israel who rejected the Lamb of God by hardening their heart. They hardened their hearts by rejecting Christ as the Lamb of God and they rejected Christ as King. Then the third one here is Paul's witness. So again, triple hardening showing the condition of Israel as a nation. They rejected the Gospel of God's grace. Tertullus gave all the glory unto a man. He flattered Felix.

Tertullus began to accuse Paul. Note: These were lies presented as flattery. Felix did not bring peace or prosperity to those he governed. History records that Felix had several revolts with such brutality that he earned for himself the horror, not the thanks, of the Jewish population. Felix ordered a massacre of thousands of Jews in Caesarea, with many more Jewish homes looted by the Roman soldiers. Felix was once a slave, but gained his freedom and rose to power through his brother Pallas' connections with the imperial court. Felix's rule in Judea was marked by brutality and corruption. He is said to have orchestrated the assassination of the Jewish high priest at one time. Felix is also known for his marriage to Drusilla, a Jewish princess who was already married to another man, which he facilitated through his power as governor. Tertullus' flattery is an often-neglected sin, one that the Bible speaks about more often than one might think. Ro 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Then another scripture is in Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. Felix must have wondered what were these Jewish leaders are after that they should come all the way from Caesarea to flatter me? The presence of all three (Ananias, the elders, and a skilled lawyer) at the court of Felix reminds us of how serious the Jewish leadership was about obtaining a conviction against Paul. Tertullus continues in Ac 24:4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency (kindness) a few words. 5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. The charges brought against Paul were #1. He is called a pestilent fellow and the word pestilent means a plague or a disease. They refer to Paul as a disease. #2. He charged Paul of being a mover of sedition among the Jews. **Sedition means insurrection, or rebellious.** He was trying to accuse Paul of bringing a rebellion against Rome. Then #3. He called him a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

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They tried to say the Christians were a sect. Then the 4th charge is in Ac 24:6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. He accused Paul of profaning the temple and the judging **according to our law was referring to stoning**. Ancient Judea was filled with would-be messiahs and revolutionaries against Rome. Tertullus wanted to put Paul in the same group with these kinds of terrorists. Ac 24:7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. 9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so. The other Jewish accusers present (the high priest and the elders) agreed with the charges, but they also offered no supporting evidence. Here is Paul's answer. Ac 24:10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: **** It is interesting to note that Paul respects the authority of Felix.

Ac 24:11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. Ac 24:12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: **** Paul answers the charge of being a pestilent man nor was he leading an insurrection. An insurrection is raising up the people to rebel. He answers the charge that they said he was profaning the temple. ** They could not prove these things against Paul. Ac 24:13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: 15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. 16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. *** Paul said that he believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Israel and that he also believed all things written in the law and in the prophets.

He also said the he believed in the same hope that the Jews themselves had toward God and that was that there shall be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and the unjust. It was because of the resurrection that Paul spoke of. Paul always had a clear conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men knowing that there is going to be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. Ac 24:17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. **** It was the offerings that Paul brought to the saints at Jerusalem. 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. 20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, 21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day. ***** Paul met all the obligations and requirements of the law to be in the temple. The resurrection of Jesus was the cornerstone of Paul's gospel, and this central belief was not accepted.

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He wasn't with a multitude or causing trouble. V19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. Where are the accusers, they should be here. Notice for a moment how Paul declared from the fulness of his heart what he knew of Jesus Christ. The very primary preaching of the apostle Paul was the resurrection of the dead. Paul said, to the council of the Pharisees and Sadducees, concerning the resurrection of the dead; he said I am called in question. He declared, if Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins. The resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of the righteous is a doctrine which we believe whole heartedly. Who is the resurrection? Joh 11:25 Jesus said unto her, (Martha) I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: Ac 24:22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. ***** Felix was not a Christian but he wasn't stupid either, he knew what Paul was preaching about.

Ac 24:23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him. **Felix put Paul under house arrest and gives him liberty to minister and be ministered to. Though he knew Paul was Innocent, he didn't release him because he did not want to offend the Jews. God's will for Paul was to witness to King Agrippa. Ac 24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Paul's theme was faith in Christ in the Gospel. Drusilla was the daughter of Agrippa (I) and this is Felix's third wife. Felix had her leave her husband and marry him. They are not godly people at all, but God still uses them for his will whether they be yielded or not. Her name means fruitful or dewy-eyed. Ac 24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*** Here we see how the Holy Spirit convicted Felix of the Gospel. Felix believed in Christ's righteousness and the judgment to come and he trembled.

So, his answer was when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. In other words, Felix was saying when it will not cost me too much because he was a political man. Ac 24:26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. He was hoping for money. (A bribe). Paul was bound at this time for two years. Ac 24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix's room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound. ***Festus means festival. Now Festus comes into power. Though Paul was bound, yet the Word of God was not bound. Paul said in 2Ti 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. God's Word was being fulfilled even with the imprisonment of Paul? Paul was bearing the name of Jesus before kings. Jesus said in Acts to Ananias Ac 9:15 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: God begins His deliverance of Paul by the Roman authority. Ro 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. He was speaking of civil authorities and God uses them. They are God's servants even though they don't know it. They are not godly people at all, but God still uses them for his will whether they be yielded or not.

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Felix said, go away for now; when I have a convenient time, I will call for you: Felix also was unwilling to declare his decision against Jesus. Instead, he rejected Jesus under the pretense of delaying his decision. Many respond to the gospel in this way; they express their rejection through delay, by delaying their decision to commit to Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us to come to Jesus in repentance and faith today: Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). Ac 25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, 3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. *** Festus reigned in 60 AD and he died in 62 AD, so he doesn't reign very long. The Jews tried to get Festus to release Paul and their idea was to lay and wait to kill him. Murder is in the heart of those that reject Christ. We first saw that in Cain when he slew Able.

Ac 25:4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. 5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. 6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. *** Festus gets right to the point. Ac 25:7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. 8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended anything at all. *** Paul witnessed to them. Ac 25:9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? *** The flesh is always willing to do the flesh a pleasure. The Holy Spirit knew that the Jews were plotting to kill Paul. That was their whole purpose to get Paul out of Festus' control. But God was directing this whole scene.

Ac 25:10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go. Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen. It was also his liberty, because he was falsely accused. Festus thought what Paul had told the Jews about Christ was a superstition and not worthy of death. He doubted their questions and so he granted Paul to go to Jerusalem and be judged there. Ac 25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

But Paul here refuses to die, but appeals unto Caesar, but we must remember Jesus came to give Himself to die on the cross. But Paul's course is not yet finished. So, to die here for Paul would be a defeat. We read later when Paul was ready to go home with Jesus. 2Ti 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

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*** Here Paul knew that he was to die in victory because he had finished his course. Paul was to suffer for Christ but not yet to die before his accusers. In 1Ti 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. So, Paul here exercises his right because it was not yet Paul's time to die. Paul's great sufferings is an example of how great God's grace is, and how great the victory in His spirit.****This is for us that we believe on Christ. Paul paved the road for us in his sufferings. We are to accept the afflictions that come for the gospel's sake. These afflictions for Paul in Acts 25 were for the Gospel's sake. 2Ti 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou **partaker** of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Festus thought the Jews would really have some bad things against Paul, but they were just questions of their own religion. Festus knew they were not worthy of death. Festus had no faith of his own as he said, it was their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

Ac 25:13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus. 14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. 16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. 17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. 18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: 19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. We see here that Paul witnessed before kings. Agrippa was more curious than anything. There was no further need for Paul to come before him because he had appealed unto Caesar. And according to Roman Law there was no need for further examination.

Ac 25:20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar. 22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him. Ac 25:23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.*** Not only does Agrippa come but Bernice with all of her pomp. Agrippa and Bernice were the scandal of Judea. They were blood brother and sister who had not married but were living together as man and wife. Agrippa was only seventeen when his father died the horrible death of being eaten by worms after putting James to death in Acts 12:1-23. Agrippa was a Jew who was reared in Rome and was strongly attached to the Romans. Bernice was the sister to Drusilla, wife of Felix.

This was an opportunity for Paul to testify of the gospel before kings, and rulers of authority. So now the gospel goes forth. Festus was trying to find something that he could charge Paul with.

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He was hoping through further examination, he would find something against Paul or something more to accuse Paul with. The Lord told Paul, Ac 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. Ac 25:24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. 27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him. God desires His people to prepare for crisis.

What we have seen tonight reminds of 1Co 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. We are in the last days and we must be prepared. We must bring our lives into conformity to the divine standard of the word of God. This will enable us to stand firm at that time of testing and trial. When secular rulers unite with religious leaders to dictate matters of conscience, we will really see who fears and serves God. When the darkness is deepest, the light of a godlike character will shine the brightest. When every other trust fails, then it will be seen who has an abiding trust in God. And while the enemies of truth are on every side, watching the believers for evil, God will watch over us for good. He will be to us as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. In these last days, we will need courage, firmness, and a knowledge of God and His word. Our motives will be questioned by a world that has rejected the cross, and our efforts misinterpreted, and our names cast out as evil. Satan will work with all his deceptive power to influence the heart and cloud the understanding, to make evil appear good, and good evil.

The stronger and purer the faith of God's people, and the firmer their determination to obey Him, the more fiercely Satan will strive to stir up against us. It will require faith in God and we must know, reckon and yield to the Holy Spirit by the word of God. We follow Paul as he followed Christ. Would we be ready to go this way of the Apostle Paul if called to? Earnestly the Apostle Paul made answer, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am," adding, as he raised his fettered hands, "except these bonds. Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice in justice should have worn the fetters that bound the Apostle Paul. All these were guilty of grievous crimes. These offenders had that day heard the offer of salvation through the name of Christ, but they rejected the cross. Joh 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. There might have been one, at least, who was almost persuaded to accept the grace and pardon offered but refused. Agrippa put aside the offered mercy, refusing to accept the cross of a crucified Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

The king's curiosity was satisfied, and, rising from his seat, he signified that the interview was at an end. As the assembly dispersed, they talked among themselves, saying, this man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Though Agrippa was a Jew, he did not share the narrow-minded zeal and blind prejudice of the Pharisees.

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This man, he said to Festus, might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar. But the case had been referred to that higher tribunal, and it was now beyond the jurisdiction of either Festus or Agrippa. Paul the aged prisoner, chained to his soldier guard, had in his appearance nothing that would lead the world to pay him any respect. Yet in this man Paul, apparently without friends or wealth or position, and held as a prisoner for his faith in the Son of God. I believe all heaven was interested. I believe angels were his attendants. The glory of Christ shined upon Paul, for it paled, the pomp and pride of royalty of the king. It would not have been surprising if they would have been stricken to the earth, as were the Roman guards at the sepulcher of Christ. For what they do, they do unto Christ. Jesus said, Mt 18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which **believe in me**, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Ro 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? God is for us! He will not let anything happen to us. 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

But look at the few verse before that in Romans 8 29-30. God is for us, because, according to the words of the apostle Paul, he has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his own dear Son. He is the potter who molds the clay according to His own will while it revolves upon the wheel. My soul is written upon the palms of Jesus' hands, and graven on His heart; so, no weapon which is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue which riseth against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn? Then, He is for us, for He has called us! When Abraham left the land of his forefathers, and went forth, not knowing whither he went, he was quite safe, though in the midst of merciless enemies, because God had called him. Who raised up the righteous man from the east, and called him, and gave the nations before him, and made him ruler over kings? Who but the God that called him? Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward. This became his comfort. God had called him. When God calls, He will not desert His chosen. You all have been chosen in His Son Jesus Christ, because you are born again. Then, He has justified us; He is for us! We are wrapped up with the righteousness of Christ, and, wearing that glorious robe. The eye of God sees no fault in us. God sees no sin in us. Christ is seen, and not a sinner; Ps 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Christ is perfect and the believer is seen as perfect in Him.

Then because He has glorified us. Now, in one sense, God's people are glorified even now, for he hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. It does not say, He hath promised that we shall sit there, but he hath made us sit there. We do sit there at this hour, for Christ is the representative of every believer for whom He shed His blood; and when Christ took His seat in heaven, every elect child of God took his seat in heaven. Remember, beloved, that the glorification of God's people is a certain fact; it is not a thing which may be, but it is a thing which must be.

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Ac 26:1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: 2 I think myself **happy**, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: 3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. Why was Paul happy to speak before King Agrippa? Paul was pleased to preach the gospel to kings and rulers. In the auditorium in the city of Caesarea Paul spoke to Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, commanders of the Roman Legion, and all the prominent men of Caesarea in Acts 25:23. This was a tremendous opportunity, and Paul was certainly happy for that opportunity. Paul was also hoping that King Agrippa would see through these Jews and what they were trying to do. Noter this: Paul was before the man whose great-grandfather Herod the Great, had tried to kill Jesus as a baby; his grandfather had John the Baptist beheaded; his father had martyred the first apostle, James. Agrippa's family history made him unlikely to receive Paul warmly.

Ac 26:4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. V4-5 Paul gives his testimony from a youth. He said he was a son of a Pharisee. Then Paul goes on in V5 how that he was a Pharisee. Paul was born in Tarsus, several hundred miles from Jerusalem. At a relatively young age he came to live at Jerusalem. Not only was Paul a faithful Jew, but was known as a faithful man among the Jews, living according to the strictest sect of the Pharisees. Ac 26:6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: *** This was the reason the Jews were accusing him. What is that hope? Ac 26:7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. The hope is the promise that God made unto our fathers. That hope is found in V8. Ac 26:8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? The hope was by the resurrection of Christ.

V8 was Paul's question to king Agrippa because he wanted him to believe. God created all things so why would it be incredible for Him to raise the dead. This hope was given to Israel even back in Ge 3:15. Since Agrippa was an expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews, he should have understood the belief that God could raise the dead. Why should it be thought incredible that God can do anything? As Jesus said, with God all things are possible in Matt 19:26. Yet it should be especially easy for Agrippa to believe that God raises the dead. There are many clear statements in the Old Testament such as Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. Ac 26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

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11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. *** This is the third account of his conversion. He tells him of the zeal he had for the Jewish religion in V9, 10 and 11. Before his conversion, Paul believed he must persecute the followers of Jesus. Some he imprisoned (shut up in prison), some he killed (they were put to death), and some he forced to renounce Jesus (coerced them to blaspheme). Paul later speaks of the great regret he had over his prior life as a persecutor in 1Co 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. And then in 1Ti 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Maybe the fact that he forced them to blaspheme weighed especially on his conscience.

Paul gave his voice against them: This implies that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin, having a vote against Christians who were tried before the Sanhedrin such as Stephen was in Acts 7. We don't know this for sure but history says that if Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin, it also means that at that time he was married, because it was a requirement for all members of the Sanhedrin. Since as a Christian, he was single and he wrote in 1Co 7:7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. History says that it may mean that Paul's wife either died or deserted him when he became a Christian. We just don't know these things. Ac 26:12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, **** Paul starts his testimony to Agrippa of his conversion. Ac 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. *** This Christ who is brighter than the sun at noon day.

Ac 26:14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, (V18, was his mission) 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. This is Paul's fullest account yet of his experience on the road to Damascus. He first noted that he went on his mission of hate and persecution with the authority and commission of the same religious leaders who now accused him. Paul saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun: Paul literally saw the light before he saw the light spiritually. Paul went to Damascus supremely confident that he was right; it took a light brighter than the midday sun to show him he was wrong.

I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting: These words changed Paul's world. He immediately understood that Jesus was alive, not dead. He understood that Jesus reigned in glory instead of being damned in shame.

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He realized that in persecuting the followers of Jesus he persecuted Jesus, and in persecuting Jesus he fought against the God of his fathers. Jesus appeared to Paul for a purpose: The religious leaders sent Paul to Damascus for a purpose, with authority and commission. Now he must choose another purpose, the purpose of Jesus. The purpose was to make Paul a minister and a witness. Paul was commissioned to be a minister, which means he was to be a servant of the things which he had seen, and of the things which Jesus would yet reveal to him. The commission of the Christian is not to make the message or our testimony serve us; we are called to serve the message. It was to make Paul a minister and a witness: Paul was also called to be a witness of those things of Christ. The commission of the Christian is not to create an experience or create the message, but to witness the message of Christ and experience the message within our life. He sent Paul to open their eyes and our eyes: Jesus described the work Paul would do.

At that moment on the road to Damascus, Paul was blinded by the great light from heaven. His eyes were not yet opened physically, but Jesus was going to send him to open the eyes of others, both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus then told Paul of four results that would come from the opening of the eyes: Paul and we would be turned from darkness to light. Then we and Paul were turned from the power of Satan to God. Then to receive forgiveness of sins. And then to receive an inheritance among God's people. Then Jesus told Paul it would be those who are sanctified by faith in Christ: This was how Jesus described His followers, His people, we, His family. We are sanctified (set apart from sin and self), and we are sanctified by faith in Jesus (not by works or spiritual achievement, but by our connection of love and trust in Jesus). Imagine Paul speaking these things to King Agrippa. The auditorium where Paul spoke was filled with important people and dignitaries, but Paul speaking these words with special attention and focus towards Agrippa. This was an invitation to Agrippa to become one of those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus. His eyes could be opened just as Paul's were on the road to Damascus. But he refuses.

Ac 26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. *** Paul lists some of the places that he carried the Gospel. He was obedient to the ministry that Christ had called him to. Paul was sent to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. This is what Paul's ministry was. Ac 26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. The reason for the persecution was because he was obedient to what Christ had called him to do and it stirred up the Jews that they wanted to kill him. They were jealous and did not want Paul to be noticed or followed by the people. Ac 26:22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: ****Paul gives God the glory. He obtained help of God. He gives all the praise unto God for himself being obedient to this vision. God enabled Paul to continue witnessing and so forth.

Paul received help from God. This help wasn't to release him from prison; it was the help from God that He gave him the opportunity and ability to speak to small and great about who Jesus is and what Jesus had done.

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Paul was more interested in telling people about Jesus than in his personal freedom. He was saying that the gospel agrees with the whole council of God. There is nothing in Paul's gospel that does not agree with the Old Testament Covenant. Ac 26:23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. These were the three main points to Paul's preaching: Jesus' death, His resurrection, and the preaching of this good news to the whole world, without respect to either Jew or Gentile. 24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. **** Refer to Ho 6:1-3; Dan 12:2; Job 19:25-27; Ps 16:9-11 that all through these scriptures, the resurrection was foretold. Festus was under much conviction. Then the next verse is Paul's answer. What we see here is that Festus rejected the resurrection. Ac 26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. 26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

*** Festus lived during the time of Christ, so it was not hid in the corner, and the resurrection was talked about, but many hearts rejected it. 1Co 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. Ac 26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Paul knew that king Agrippa knew and believed the prophets of the Old Testament. ***Paul also knew that King Agrippa was really under conviction. So, we have the answer in V 28. Ac 26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. **** Here we see that King Agrippa was convicted in His heart yet not saved why? Because of unbelief concerning Christ and His resurrection. He would not receive Christ. He rejected Christ and His resurrection. The Holy Spirit was there. Almost will not get it. Ac 26:29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.*** Paul was wanting him and all men to believe like he did to have that same revelation knowledge that they too could be a child of God, born again.

Then except these bonds means he was under persecution. Ac 26:30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: 31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar. He has not done anything worthy of death or even to be in prison. Then was Paul too hasty in appealing unto Caesar? Do you think if Paul would have kept his mouth shut God would have set him free? Paul was obedient unto Christ and God kept him safe all the way to Rome from the Jews that wanted to kill him. Paul was in God's perfect will. This was a righteous act on Paul's part being obedient unto God and God kept him safe.

The Apostle Paul had no human attorney. All those days of severe trial, over two weary years, he had to plead his just cause himself. Who could do it more effectively than he? He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the truth, strengthened by the Lord's presence. He was encouraged by the need of the people for the Gospel, and pulled on by the same eternal reward which comforted Jesus. For Paul wrote these words:

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Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Hebrews 12:2). Paul showed that even though he was in chains, he had more freedom in Jesus than any of the royalty listening had. They could not accept the fact that Christ was resurrected. The cause of Paul's persecution by the Jews was because of the hope of the promise made by God unto our fathers. Why did the Holy Spirit place this chapter here and all these things that happened to Paul? There is one scripture that really sticks out to me. Ac 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and **inheritance** among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Paul wanted those folks and us to receive an inheritance. Paul said in Ac 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is **able to build you up**, and to **give you an inheritance** among all them which are sanctified.***What is Paul describing in this verse? It is the food that we need to grow. This word of God will build us up to receive this inheritance.

That is the only thing that will prepare us to have the full inheritance that He has promised us. That is to win Christ as my bridegroom. This is how we feed sheep. The food for sheep is the word of His grace. Why? Because that is able to build up and will give us this **our inheritance**. How much of the word of His grace have we taken in. What we have laid hold of here is to the degree of our inheritance. We must lay hold of it. Will we just be a palm waver or do we want to be in the closest place with Jesus to rule and reign with Him. It seemed that everywhere Paul went he knew he would not see them much longer, so he commends them to God. It was God who was going to keep the Church and it would be by the word of His grace. Why has the enemy fought so hard against the Church to have the word of His Grace. Paul wrote in Ro 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Who is behind this verse manipulating men to give fair speeches. It is the enemy himself. Then Paul said in 2Th 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

This verse and others are antichrist. The enemy is behind men manipulating them like puppets to keep God's people from their inheritance. It does not matter if the man is well dressed or shedding tears to pull on the emotions of people. If it does not align with scripture, it will take you away from God's best. The enemy does not want us to have the inheritance to win Christ. Did Paul mean when the Holy Spirit led him to write Ga 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Then I repeat our verse in Acts 26:18 To open their (our) eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, (my prayer is Lord turn the Church from darkness; they are not receiving the full Light) and from the power of Satan unto God, (this is why, the power of Satan is deceiving many) that they may receive forgiveness of sins, (Satan has deceived so many they don't even know what sin is; we see that in the world that is around us; men do not know they are men and women are the same; this is inside the Church) and **inheritance** among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

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(If we are to receive the inheritance that Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit has brought before us, in their work through the Gospel, we must be sanctified; set apart by how? By faith and faith comes by hearing and hearing of the word of God. Paul wants us to receive an inheritance. What does it mean to be set apart? Ps 4:3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. Paul said we must be separated unto God; set apart; sanctified! Paul warns us again in 2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. The enemy has turned the temple of God into idols! Then Paul says; 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. Paul wants us to have an inheritance. All through these studies in Acts after Paul's conversion, Paul walked alone. Although the Lord was always with Him, Paul as a representative of the Gospel; He walked alone outside the camp. Will that be any different for the full overcomers. For us the Lord has seen fit to allow us a few companions of like faith to walk together, praise God! But for Paul He walked alone.

Why did Paul write: 2Ti 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. Did Paul just write that to Timothy? Or is it for us. Paul did not want us to be robbed from our inheritance to have God's best. Paul said 2Ti 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. This crown is the reward that Paul saw: Reward for what? It was for his diligence in the Gospel.

He had to fight the enemy on all sides within and without. Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: He finished his course as a full overcomer. 1Co 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Php 3:14 I (Paul) press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He kept the faith. Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Henceforth (going forward) there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, (it is laid up for me, I don't have it yet but it is as good as mine) which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. What is it for us that love His appearing. This means living a life dedicated to righteousness and holiness, actively preparing for his return, and prioritizing his will above all else, with the "cost" being the commitment to live a life that aligns with a constant focus on spiritual growth; it is not a monetary cost, but a commitment to live a life dedicated to Christ. The purpose is to be built up. The word of His grace is able to build up and will give us our inheritance. What is the inheritance? It is to rule and reign with Christ!

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It is to win God's best, to grow up into Christ. We all have an inheritance but not all inheritance will be the same. We have a down payment that we have received when we were born again. Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. *** We have received the righteous life of Christ. The redemption of the purchased possession. That is, till the time when get our glorified body. We have a present inheritance as children of God right now. It is all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Remember Israel in Nu 32:5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and **bring us not over Jordan**. They wanted to stay on the wilderness side. Only Joshua and Caleb wanted to possess it. So, Israel stopped short of Canaan. They wanted the wilderness side as opposed to the fruitful portion that God had given to Abraham and to his seed. Sometimes today, people will look on the "convenient way" as the will of God. It reminds us of Lot, who beheld the plain of Jordan and decided that it looked just like the garden of the Lord (Gen. 13:10).

They see all the provisions in Canaan but they stay on the wilderness side and never enter into the land to practically acquire them. They do not let **the Word of God dictate their decision**. This tells of Christians who have a measure of spirituality and enjoy a certain amount of spiritual inheritance, but they do not enjoy God's full provision and purpose for them because they do not make them practical by the word of God. There were two and a half tribes that did not want to go into the land of Canaan. Think how terrible that was, but today there are more than that who do not want to lay hold of their place in the heavens because they have listened to other messages which tell them they will be alright just to remain where they are at. They say you don't have to overcome; you don't have to do anything; it has all been provided. These 2 ½ tribes did not want to go into the land of Canaan because they liked what they saw in the wilderness. They wanted to have their inheritance there in the wilderness. They were Rueben, Gad and the ½ tribe of Manasseh. These are the ones that are satisfied with earthly blessings. They never do appropriate their wealth in Christ. Sad to say, many today have their vision filled with only natural treasure and blessing from the Lord.

Their lives are oftentimes too filled with their many battles, but the end result will be only a temporal inheritance. They are content to remain in the wilderness side of Jordan and inherit there. They do not appreciate **or practically lay hold** of the spiritual riches that we have in Christ in the heavenlies. God gave them a decree here and said alright you can inherit on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, but there is one thing that you must do. You must go forth to battle and you must help all the children of Israel to **lay hold of their inheritance and fight the battles** (practical) and after everyone is settled, then you can come back to your own inheritance. They agreed. Nu 32:17 But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and **our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land**. **** Here is the important thing for us to realize. **These people had the same battles that those of Israel that went into the land of Canaan, but they did not receive the benefit of it.** If we choose to remain on the wilderness side, don't think we are exempt from the battle. We will go through the battles and it will not be a bed of roses. Peter said in 1Pe 1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. ****The only way that our inheritance is incorruptible is in the new creation.

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If it was in the flesh, it would be corruptible, but it is not. It is only the new creation that is incorruptible and undefiled. This is only possible in the new creation. It is not possible for the flesh. Then it fades not away. It means that it is perpetual, continuous, or eternal life. Then it is reserved in heaven for you. For all those that take hold of the new creation life, it is reserved for us. As Paul said in our text; let us open our eyes by this Gospel, and to turn from darkness to the light of His truth, and turn from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins as we fight within and without the good fight of faith and receive the **inheritance** among them which are sanctified and set apart by faith that is in me. So, we must know these things, reckon it so, and yield to the word of God that the Holy Spirit's working in our lives to grow us up into the mature sons of God in these last days.

Acts 27 The Church - March 13, 2025

Page 1

Historically we could look at this chapter as Paul's water route to Rome. But we will look at it as the journey of the Gospel down through the Church age. We also see the Holy Spirit influencing not only the men writing the history, but prophesy. God uses the natural elements working in cooperation to bring about prophesy and the word of God, the Gospel to us. God in His foreknowledge saw what would happen with the Church and yet He went ahead with it. God knew Adam would sin and yet He went right ahead and created him knowing that. Why? Because God had a further purpose in man and that was Christ Jesus would come. God permits His people, who are the apple of His eye, to suffer pain, hunger, hardship, humiliation, persecution and rejection, because God does it to work good in His people. Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Work together for good means to cooperate together. Who are we working together with. We are working together with the word of God by the Holy Spirit. That is Jesus! God takes the bad things or the hardships and sufferings and makes them cooperate together to accomplish good in our life.

It is for His purpose to be conformed to the image of His Son. Ro 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. He is working all things for our good. This chapter is the journey of the Gospel down through the Church age. Ac 27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, **they delivered** Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. 2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with **us**. 3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. 4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. We don't know much about this specific Augustan Regiment (several held that title), but it was common for Roman soldiers to accompany the transport of criminals, those awaiting trial, and merchant ships filled with grain going from Egypt to Rome.

Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us: Aristarchus and Luke (notice the us of verse 2 and beyond); Luke accompanied Paul on this voyage. The favor Paul enjoyed from Julius in V3 meant he was allowed to take these companions with him. There are a number of names given in Chapter 27, and we will look at the meaning of each. In this chapter, Paul is representative of the Gospel. The Gospel has been taken aboard this ship and Paul's destination is Rome and **Rome means strength** and it is figurative of the throne room. Italy **means calf like** or the sacrificial animal and it speaks of sanctified or strength through weakness. That was the exact purpose of the Church; to be calf like, and filled with strength of the throne room. This was the destination of the ship. The ship here speaks of the body of the Church. And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, meaning Paul and Luke. Paul's name means little and Luke's name means light. So, we have the Gospel of light and Light or Luke went with Paul. Then there were certain other prisoners. It speaks of those that follow Paul which includes us. It is those that would sail with Paul; those that would heed his Gospel. Then we have the word "they" V1 **they delivered Paul unto the ship**.

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They refers to the Gentile powers or the Roman Government. They delivered Paul or the Gospel to this ship and it was an instrument that God uses at this time. Then we have **Julius and his name means downy and hairy**. In Ge 25:25 Esau was hairy figurative of the flesh. Julius took care of Paul or the Gospel, but here he figures that wise and human influence that sets bounds around the saints of God. Notice he is a centurion of the Augustus' band. **Augustus means venerable or respected or esteemed**. So, he figures how God is over all and He is the one on the throne. So, God can even use Julius and everything to His will. *** So here we see the centurion is in charge and they enter the ship of Adramyttium which is representative of the Church or Christendom today. This ship Adramyttium brought spiritual decline and death to its passengers. The meaning of this ships name, Adramyttium, has a three-fold **meaning, court of death, I shall abide in death, and not in the race**. We can see the Holy Spirit working in this journey. Those that want to win Christ as bridegroom surely would not want to sail on this ship, they would want a more spiritual ship. So, this is the ship that most Christendom is on.

Yet we see the Gospel going on this ship. Then we see **Aristarchus and his name means best ruler** and he is from **Macedonian which means tall and it is a city of Thessalonica and it means victory over falsity or victory over the tossing of law**. So, Aristarchus was going "best ruler" which tells us of one reigning in life by Christ Jesus. Ro 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. If we are going to sail with Paul, Aristarchus will have to be our companion. We will have to be reigning in life by Christ Jesus. Macedonian which means tall, tells that we are seated together with Christ in the heavenlies. Eph 2:6. Then the city of Thessalonica means victory over falsity or victory over the tossing of law. These are two victories that we must have in our lives also. It is a twofold victory which is reigning with Christ and victory over the tossing of the law. How do these victories come? It comes by way of Paul's gospel. We only find that in Paul's Gospel. So, these are Paul's companions. I would add this about the law. Ga 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Ga 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. The law was to bring us unto Christ.

Ac 27:2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; ***They were in a small ship that hugged the coastline and that coastline was Asia. A lot of times in our lives we would want to hug the coastline. Asia means slime which tells us of man's natural building materials. When they built the tower of Babel in Genesis, they used slime for mortar. It is figurative of men's self-works or self-effort. That is exactly what the human influence is on the Church, instead of trusting in the Lord and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; they say we are saved by grace but we have to do our part or hold out faithful to the end. With our human influence and our own natural reasoning, we would plot a course on the coast of Asia. God doesn't let them go this way and we will see that more later. Ac 27:3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. Sidon means hunting. Julius gave Paul liberty to go to his friends and refresh himself. We see the freedom that the Gospel had in the early church. Again, Paul is figurative of the Gospel. Julius is figurative of that wise human influence.

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It is that man has to have his control and this ship (the church) has to be kept afloat. We hear today that you have to have organization in the Church. We hear that the church must be organized. This is man's wisdom. So, we see here that Julius gives Paul liberty to go to his friends and refresh himself. The Gospel of Paul is given liberty to those that want to hear it. Ac 27:4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. Cyprus means love blossom or fairness. It tells us again they were under the love of God and the love of Christ. The winds were contrary speaking of adversity that troubled the ship. The ship could not stay on its course with these wise human influences that wanted to direct the ship. They sailed under Cyprus or it means they got some shelter from the contrary winds. So, it is the love blossom or the love of Christ that shelters them from these winds. Ac 27:5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. Cilicia means hair cloth and it speaks of humanity. Pamphylia means many tribes which tells us of the early evangelistic activities of the Church going to all of humanity, many tribes. Then they came to Myra and it comes from the word myrrh. It speaks of the myrtle tree or the myrtle juice off of that tree. It denotes suffering. Myra is a city of Lycia. Lycia means wolfish. We remember Paul said in Ac 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

This speaks of the condition of suffering which comes because of the wolves and the adversity that is coming in if they go that way. That has happened in the Church today. These chapters show us how apostasy or how the Church has abandoned the things of the Gospel. This has set in and grew and it is a result of not heeding to Paul's Gospel. But then God used the apostate Church to preserve the Holy Scriptures down through the years. The apostate Church, the Catholic Church had charge of the scriptures and what a miracle. They never altered the scriptures. They never heeded to them in their doctrine, but they never altered the word of God. That is a miracle from God. God uses these same agencies to bring the gospel down to us. What was God's wisdom in this? 1Co 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. We know that there are divisions among us today. We know that everyone that is born again is in the body of Christ, but there are divisions. Why are all these divisions? It is not God's perfect will. God would that the body be one. V19 Paul says why there are divisions.

1Co 11:19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. *** So, what God does is use heresies or divisions to manifest the truth among the body of Christ. Paul said in 2Ti 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; **but the word of God is not bound.** God is also working in our lives to bring us to our destination as well. God is free to use whatever means to get him there. So, he uses a slave ship. Ac 27:6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. This was a grain freighter, taking grain grown in Egypt to Italy. The typical grain freighter of that period was 140 feet long and 36 feet wide. It had one mast with a big square sail, and instead of what we think of as a rudder, it steered with two paddles on the back part of the ship. They were sturdy, but because of its design, it couldn't sail into the wind. **** Julius begins to show his character here. The Holy Spirit would never put the gospel on a ship of Alexandria why? Alexandria means helper of men or man defender.

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The ship is going to Italy, but does it matter how you get there? Oh yes. We see that this ship is more concerned with humanity. They think we must help man out rather than the Gospel. It begins to be a social type of thing. Instead of the Gospel being the priority, it is now humanity's needs. They become man defender saying there is a little good in all men. They defend humanity. The Gospel says there is none good no not one. So, Julius represents the wise men of humanity of the world (Egypt). Re 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. This pictures the Church of Thyatira who are now trusting in the fleshly strength of Egypt. Thyatira was famous for their works. They were works to better humanity, to help man out and not to spread the Gospel. Ac 27:7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; **** They sailed slowly which tells us that there is no growth. They are not making any head way to their destination which is the throne room. They are sailing slowly why? Because they are on a ship of Alexandria. Cnidus means dedicated to Venus. It also means nettled. Nettled means to irritate or to annoy or vex. Dedicated to Venus speaks of idolatry.

Again, to the Church of Thyatira; Re 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. *** So, we begin to see idolatry entering in and influencing this ship as it touched this point. It would begin to irritate or to annoy or vex those who followed Paul in the Gospel. Then the wind would not let them into this port. They just came by it. So, they sailed under Crete, over against Salmone. Crete means fleshly. They sheltered under Crete or the affliction of the flesh. Salmone means from the surging and it speaks of the persecution and opposition that was in the Church in the first few centuries. Ac 27:8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. 9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because **the fast was now already past**, Paul admonished them, 10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

The Fast date in question here was probably October 5, which was the date of the Day of Atonement in A.D. 59. The idea is that as winter approached, the weather became more dangerous for sailing. The dangerous season for sailing began about September 14 and lasted until around November 11. After that date all navigation on the open sea came to an end until winter was over. **** They come into some troubling times. Paul admonished them speaking of the Gospel. The Gospel always admonishes us or gives warning. Paul admonished them that there was going to be much hurt and damage with this voyage. Fair havens means goodly parts and it speaks of God's grace. Lasea means shaggy or rocky and it also speaks of God's grace. It is not a place that appeals to the comforts of the flesh. The damage, not only of the lading and ship, means the lading was the Gospel. The ship speaks of Christendom and also the lives that sail on it. Ac 27:11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.*** Those that are in charge of the Church, do not listen to the Gospel. They listened to the owners of the ship, the centurion or Julius. Julius speaks of that wise influence. Paul's Gospel will always admonish us to abide in God's grace.

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It even gives warnings of the dangers that lie ahead. Paul's Gospel should have been given the helm to power up this ship for the last 2,000 years. The Church did not stay in the fair haven of grace according to Paul's instruction. Ac 27:12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, (it was shaggy and rocky, the grace of God is hard on the flesh.) the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. *** They wanted to get to Phenice which means palm land. It speaks of religious utopia or a glorified state on earth. It is just a little way to go. It was a short journey to Phenice. The Church as a whole thinks the same way, it is just a little way to go to winter into that religious utopia. God's grace doesn't attract many that want an easy place to stay. Grace gives no comfort to the flesh. Ac 27:13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. *** They set sail and it seems so right. They have the warm south wind blowing softly. This palm land is where they wanted to stay and winter in. There is no persecution here. Ac 27:14 But not long after, there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

****Euroclydon means an easterly tempest or a Nor'easter. It figures the evil spirits that are now driving this ship. We also see this in Mt 13:31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Man is now losing control ***Watch out when following man's wisdom when the contrary winds come. Ac 27:15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. 16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: Jesus said this concerning the deceiving south wind in Lu 6:24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. 25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. 26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. Euroclydon figures the evil spirits that are now driving this ship. Man is now losing control ***Watch out when following man's wisdom when the contrary winds come.

Ac 27:17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. *** Here it is getting worse. The words "they had taken up," and "they used helps," "undergirding the ship." They mean long ago, they would take ropes and tie them right under the ship trying to hold that ship together. It speaks of self-effort. It is man trying to keep this ship, the Church afloat. Then they are afraid they are going to fall into the quick sand. This quick sand is called syrtis major off the coast of Africa. It is real shallow sand and they didn't want to run aground so they took down the sails. This tells us that man is no longer in control of this ship. So, they take down the sails trying to do it on their own effort to try and stop the evil spirits from taking the ship. This is from not heeding Paul's Gospel. Ac 27:18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; 19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. *** How do they lighten the ship, by casting off truths and the Gospel. They threw parts of the truth overboard to lighten the ship. And if you throw over the tackling of a ship it shows they had no hope of where that ship was going to go. All control was lost.

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This tackling is a picture of the truths that would give them direction and they threw it overboard. Ac 27:20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. ** Darkness no hope. When they threw over the tackling then darkness comes in. The more they reject the truth or the light then darkness sets in and no more light is given. This dark period in Church history probably figured by this stormy tempest was when Christianity became the state religion and the dark ages entered. This was when the Catholic Church became a central institution, exercising significant political and cultural influence. Ac 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. *** This shows that Paul is the real pilot of this ship and he must be brought before Caesar. Ac 27:21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. *** Paul begins to speak, the Gospel has been silent all through the dark ages. Ac 27:22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. We are sailing with the Apostle Paul and we are followers of Paul because we heed his Gospel. **** Paul says, I exhort you to be of good cheer. That is what God's grace always does when we begin to heed Paul's Gospel and the grace of God. We can be of good cheer. The ship is going to sink. This ecclesiastical system is going to sink. It is going to go down but all on board will be saved. In the 14th century men began to believe, the just shall live by faith and they began to heed the Gospel. Ac 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. All who sail with Paul will be brought to our destination. Paul's Gospel will bring us through. It is the Gospel of God's grace. Ac 27:25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; (dark ages) 28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. 29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. Four anchors tells us of the four-point of a compass, north, south, east and west or the four corners of the earth. Four is number of human weakness. They were wishing for the light of day. They cast out their anchors and waited for the light to shine. The Gospel does shine. Ac 27:30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, 31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. 32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. These shipmen figure the leaders of the ecclesiastical ship and they didn't want to show they were abandoning the ship so they were under pretext or color to let down this little boat to cast out more anchors. They were really abandoning the ship. When times get rough, the leaders are the ones that jump off first.

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Paul tells them here, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Ac 27:32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.*** It is only by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and in God's grace. The life boat was just another means of escape and sometimes in our experience we have some other means as a security blanket. Sometimes God will take that away from us, because He wants to only trust in Him for all things and especially for our salvation. Ac 27:33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. 34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. 37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. We see here that Paul's Gospel begins to be received. There are souls that are nourished. Prior to this verse, we don't see any truth being given out all through the dark ages the truth as it were was shut up.

Here the grace message goes forth and nourishes us. There were 276 souls on this ship. 200 means prove something; and 70 means rulership; 6 means influence over worldly man or Satan. The Gospel of grace feeds and proves, and has rulership over man if we allow it. Ac 27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. 39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. *** Here it is day time. This is a picture of the saints that are fed are able to cast out food for others. The word of God begins to be spread out among the sea. In the Reformation (1517- 1685) the Bible, the word of God, it was published and spread out into the sea. If you remember in Catholicism the Bible was not out in the open and it was not broad cast as it were, but now it is cast out into the sea. Ac 27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.***

They cut off all their earthly ties and loosed the anchor. They cut away the anchors and trusted in God's grace. The ecclesiastical ship is headed for shore. Ac 27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. These two seas that run together tell us of Catholicism and Protestantism. The forepart or front part was stuck fast which represents Catholicism and the hinder part is Protestantism. We see that today Catholicism is stuck fast. The hinder part was broken up and we can see that in Protestantism today because it was formed by protest. It was broken up and today there is not much protest. It was broken up by the waves. Protestantism has been broken up into many sects. They don't even have much in common any more. They have different beliefs or schisms. Ac 27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. *** In the early Church the counsel was to kill those that escape. There was great persecution in the Spanish Inquest and those that were burned at the stake. Spanish Inquisition; These true Christians were murdered because they loved the Scriptures, or had portions of a true Bible, and/or an entire Bible. The believers were hunted down and murdered by the blood thirsty men of the Inquisition.

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Ac 27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. The centurion was willing to save Paul, or save the Gospel and if you remember they wanted to kill the prisoners. And Paul was a prisoner which would have done away with the Gospel, but God did not allow this. *** They commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: This represents us. Those that can swim get to land first.

We are swimming with Paul taking in and going with the Gospel and running the race. Notice, And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. *** It tells us of the fragments of the truth. We don't have to know a lot of the truth to be saved just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The thief on the cross, had simple faith. The broken pieces of the ship speak to us of the different denominations that still have a piece of that ship in their doctrines. These broken pieces represent more of the truth. Although they also have a lot of Catholicism in their doctrine as well. They don't have a lot of strength but they can cling to the broken pieces of truth and get to shore or safety. We see here that God again delivers Paul for the purpose unto which he had sent him. It was by the centurion or Roman Authorities.

Key Lessons from Acts 27: Comments of Tonight's Bible Study

1. God's Sovereignty in All Things

- Even though God knew the Church would face struggles, He allowed it to fulfill His greater purpose.
- Despite hardships, God's plan always prevails.

2. Suffering is a Tool for Spiritual Growth

- Just as Paul endured storms and imprisonment, believers must endure trials for God's greater purpose.
- Romans 8:28 reminds us that all things work together for good for those who love God.

3. Trusting in God, Not Human Wisdom

- The sailors relied on their own understanding but ultimately lost control of the ship.
- When we rely on human wisdom instead of God's Word, we end up in spiritual danger.

4. The Importance of Following the True Gospel

- Paul's warnings were ignored, just as the Gospel is often ignored today.
- Those who stayed with Paul were saved, illustrating the need to stay faithful to God's truth.

5. God Uses Even a Broken Church to Accomplish His Will

- Despite divisions and apostasies in Church history, God still used the institutional Church to preserve His Word.
- Even today, remnants of truth remain in different denominations.

6. Faith is Our Anchor in Life's Storms

- Just as Paul had faith that God would bring them through the storm, we must trust in God during difficult times.
- Those who anchored themselves in faith reached safety.

7. The Gospel Will Prevail Despite Opposition

- The ship (the Church) was battered, but the Gospel remained intact and reached its destination.
- Truth cannot be destroyed, and those who hold onto it will endure.

Acts 28 March 20, 2025

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In Chapter 28 we see the final revival foreshadowed which probably began in the early 1900. Ac 28:1 And when they escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. 2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. It was now in the month of October. *** Melita means refuge and affording honey and cared for. It speaks of our bitter experiences in God's will. Every time we have a bitter experience, it is followed by the sweetness of God's word. God just doesn't lead us into bitterness; it is always followed by the sweetness of His word. This is about January or February 60AD when they came to Melita (Modern day Malta). They got there by swimming on broken pieces of the ship. That rain speaks of revival. It speaks of God's grace and Pentecost at the close of the Church age and it pictures what began in the early 1900's. Ac 28:2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.*** They received Paul and those with him and that is true of the Gospel as it begins to go out, the Gentiles received it gladly. The cold speaks of the circumstances in our lives and the rain speaks of the Holy Spirit.

Melita (modern Malta) The island of Melita was originally a Phoenician colony; it is about 20 miles long, about 10-12 miles wide and about 60 miles in circumference. It is located about 60 miles from the coast of Sicily. The word Melita is of Canaanite origin and for many storm-battered ships, it was a true refuge on more than one occasion. It was known for producing large quantities of honey, and is supposed to have been called Melita from the Greek word signifying honey. The island is an immense rock of white soft freestone or limestone, with a covering of earth about one foot in depth. It produces cotton, excellent fruits, and fine honey; it had excellent harbors on the Eastern and Western shores. The Phaeacians were probably the first inhabitants of this island: they were expelled by the by the Greeks; the Greeks by the Carthaginians; the Carthaginians by the Romans, who possessed it in the time of the Apostle Paul. Think about V3 how the Holy Spirit put this here. The Apostle Paul gathered wood for the fire, even though there were probably many among the 276 passengers and crew which could have done that. Paul's servant heart was always evident. So, why did Paul do that? Again, he represents the Gospel.

Ac 28:3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. These people thought Paul to be a murderer. People often draw the wrong conclusion, and suppose that suffering is to be traced to some particular crime. They regard it as a direct judgment from heaven. Jesus refuted this line of reasoning in Joh 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. When certain trials come, we are not to direct judgments for sin; though in some cases they may be. In the case of the drunkard, the gambler, and the drug user, we know that the loss of property, health, and reputation is the direct result of specific sins.

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5 And he (Paul) shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Paul didn't let it bother him. He didn't scream, Why? Or I can't take any more of this! or Can't You see I'm serving You? Paul didn't look at those sitting by the fire and say; you should have gathered wood instead of me. Note the active spirit of the Apostle Paul pictured as the Gospel. Whatever was to be done, if he were able to take part in it, he never hesitated to get involved, whether it was in consoling about a difficulty, in comforting under danger, or helping by bodily labor to relieve the general distress. Again, this is what the Gospel does for us. Remember, he is probably just as wet, exhausted, sore and cold as everyone else. ***These bundle of sticks that Paul gathered represent humanity. Paul's Gospel goes out and gathers sticks and in 1Co 3:13 Every man's **work** shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. Here is that word work again. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Then Paul tells us in 2Co 6:1 We then, as **workers** together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. *** This is not simply working for Him as being a slave or a servant but working with Him as a co-laborer. We are partners as it were with God. We beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. This happens because people do not take advantage of what they have in Christ. They don't come into the provision, and they don't come into the glories of the grace of God and these wonderful provisions that Christ has provided for us on Calvary. He gave Himself for us and provided His righteousness. People can come into salvation and lay hold of being saved, but there so much more grace to the grace of God than just the grace of being born again and being filled with the Holy Spirit and being healed. The depths of the grace of God can be left untouched. We will never exhaust the riches of Divine grace. But we must lay hold of what God holds out to us. If we do not walk in these wonderful ways of grace than it is just in vain. There is an emptiness there. What is the key? Walk in them. Be diligent to pursue them.

Being diligent means effort and staying focused on our goal. What is our goal? First it is to finish our racecourse and to press toward mark to win Christ. We will face many difficulties in this life and it will take diligence to stay in the fight of faith. Then Peter says, 1Pe 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. *** These sticks are us and we have been gathered in and we are placed on a fire. This is what the Gospel does and the first thing we begin to understand is that these fiery trials affect us. The barbarians saw this viper that came out of the heat which speaks to us of Satan or that satanic opposition. We see that Gospel repels it. Mr 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*** This doesn't mean that we are to go around handling snakes, but we see the power over the serpent. These are the signs that follow. These Barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer.*** This reminds us of Job's friends, they said Job had committed some grievous sin and this was why he was in such a trial. Sometimes people think that of us or we may think that of ourselves but it isn't that, but it is a purifying fire or a refining fire. What **catches their eye** is when Paul shook the beast off.

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Notice in Ac 28:6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. The people had seen cases of viper-bite before, and they knew what was going to happen. This does catch the eyes of the barbarians and it catches all eyes when people see the results of the Gospel in our lives. People see the trials in our lives and they will watch how we are overcoming it. When we see others' lives that are in a great trial and then we see no harm come to them that speaks volumes. It is the Gospel of grace that can do that for us. Satan has no power over us in the fire, we have shaken him off and Christ is with us. Ac 28:6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. They said no doubt this man is a murderer...yet justice does not allow him to live: V6 is the power of God's witness to the world. The natives were convinced that justice had finally caught up with this prisoner. Justice is actually a reference to the Greek goddess of justice, Dikee. The natives, knowing Paul was a prisoner, assumed he committed a great crime, and the goddess of justice would not permit Paul to escape unpunished.

Before this, they took him to be a murderer, and now they think he is a god, which was a common reaction by the Gentiles, when anything extraordinary was performed. Here they saw Paul bitten by a viper, but he went on about his business as if nothing had happened. If you remember that Paul had been taken for a god at Lystra. They took Paul for Mercury, and Barnabas for Jupiter when the apostle cured the cripple of Acts 14:11. Then later on in the same place Paul was stoned by the Jews. Now we have the opposite reaction. Paul is neither a murderer nor a god. Instead of being drowned or poisoned by "justice," Paul had actually been protected from both by Jesus Christ. Ac 28:7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. In the same quarters means in that place, or that part of the island which is near the place where the shipwreck occurred. They discovered they were close by lands belonging to the leading man of the island. Possessions is used here to refer to his property, lands, his place of residence. *** Publius means popular. He was probably a Roman magistrate stationed there. Publius treated them as guests for three days.

This was until arrangements could be made for a more permanent dwelling-place. Since they must remain on the island through the stormy weather of winter before they could start out again, it would be necessary to provide them with their own housing. 8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: 10 Who also honored us with many honors; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary. Imagine, feeding and clothing 276 people. They had given them many presents before, and now they laded us. They furnished us with things that were necessary for our journey. They supplied us with all we needed, including food and clothing. The bounty must have been large if we consider the number of those (276) for whom it was given. But Publius would set the example, and others were not slow to follow it. Yet, nothing is said about any of these people obeying the Gospel. It could be though that once in Rome, Paul would get the message out that someone needed to go to Melita and preach.

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We do know that it's very likely that many of them were converted under the Apostle Paul's ministry. It would be hard to believe that the Apostle Paul would be on this island for three months, as he was, and fail to preach the Gospel to these people. His preaching was always met with some success. The great respect shown him at his departure seems to confirm this; though we have no account of any church, or churches, or preachers of the word in this place, in history. I did find that in the sixth century, history mentions a bishop of the island of Melita. Note: Publius, though ignorant of it, entertained an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ among those strangers. The Lord turned the bonds of Paul to glory; he stayed for three months, and many were healed and converted to the Lord. Jesus Christ was with the Apostle Paul. Publius' father and the people received all the blessings for their hospitality in healing of sicknesses and diseases. Note also Luke was a physician; yet we do not find him taking a part in these cures. As a medical person, he might have been of use to the father of Publius; but he is not even consulted. Ac 28:11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

**** It does seem strange to get on another ship of Alexandria because the last one ended up in shipwreck. Alexandria is a city in Egypt and it means man defender. It speaks of those that defend humanity. It is a ship out of Egypt. It tells us of the Pentecostals that became denominations and organizations. They had organized the church. The Gospel (Paul) is now on this ship. Castor (and Pollux): Jupiter's twins; Pollux: Jupiter's young men. This might speak of the evil spirits that are on board this ship. When man puts his trust in man instead of the Gospel, who are they leaning on to guide them? Evil spirits. Ac 28:12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. Syracuse means an exalted hearing. They are three days which tells us that they are on resurrection ground. Ac 28:13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:**** They fetched a compass which simply means they sailed around to Rhegium and this south wind and it lands them at Puteoli. This south wind is a little different because it brings them to Puteoli which means abounding in wells or mineral springs. It speaks of the living water.

So, we see that the Gospel brings us here to these abounding wells. These south winds brought them to the living water. Song 4:16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Ac 28:14 Where we found brethren and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so, we went toward Rome. ***This is the only time that we see here that Paul found brethren at Puteoli. In prophesy it tells us that we are getting to the end of the Church age. We are getting close to Rome to those who are running the race speaks of the throne room or to the throne of God. Rome means strength. Ac 28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. **** Appii forum - The Christian brethren in Rome went out along the Appian Road to welcome the Apostle Paul upon hearing of his arrival at Puteoli. Appii Forum was the usual resting-place for travelers at the end of the first day's journey from Rome. It is mentioned also as a halting place in the account of Paul's journey to Rome.

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**** Paul was a prisoner, but they did not despise his chain; he was a Christian about to answer for his life. By no means could Paul be more effectually cheered than by a realization of God's care for him. If God be for us, who can be against us? Appii forum means persuasive market or I shall be nourished. It tells of the last of this age of those of the house of Israel that are looking for or the persuasive market speaking of those that could go and buy and sell goods. It speaks of those that are willing to minister to the Gospel and I shall be nourished tells us of those Hebrews looking to God to nourish them with the Gospel and to have that expectancy of the Christ. Ac 28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.** They delivered Paul and the prisoners that sailed with Paul. The arrival at Rome is a type of Translation. Paul's message begins to go out to the Jew. He speaks this message to his countrymen in Rome; This is a foreshadow of the Gospel beginning to go forth during the next age. Ac 28:17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. *** He committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet he was delivered prisoner. Ac 28:18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.**** Again the Roman government all through this Church age, Paul's Gospel has been declared innocent. Even most of the Church today don't believe Paul's Gospel is for the Church. They are stuck to the four gospels. Ac 28:19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. Paul did not accuse his nation (Israel), but he was constrained to appeal unto Caesar. Note: At the time of translation, the ship will be Shipwreck. It will be destroyed. The Church System will be destroyed. Paul's purpose in desiring to go to Rome. Romans 1:11-12 It was to establish the saints there. Ac 28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. *** It was for the hope of Israel that Paul was bound with this chain. That hope was for Israel to be justified before God by the resurrection of Christ.

Ac 28:21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.*** We can see a little of Israel's heart down through the age. They really don't understand the Gospel. All they know is that it is spoken against. Although this is about Israel, it reminds us of the Catholic Church. They don't want anyone but the priest to preach. They kept it from the people. Ac 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.*** This is a picture that all during the next age or the kingdom age. Paul testifies of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Paul's message was the Gospel of Grace and now it is the Kingdom of God which will be given out during the millennial reign. It will be the Gospel of God's grace going out to the Jews during the 1,000 years from morning till evening.

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Ac 28:24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. **** It will be that way during the millennial reign. Man will not be deceived, yet men will not believe and some will reject Christ. Men will not be deceived, but we will see the hardness of hearts. Ac 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken **one word**, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers. That one word had to be Gentiles spoken. V26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. *****People are responsible for what they hear. This verse was taken from Isa 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. *** we hear a lot of sounds but we do not listen to everyone. ***** God is sent unto the Gentiles. Ac 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

Ac 28:29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. 30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. Paul was in bonds at this time under house arrest. It tells us of the Church age where the Gospel is in bonds or Paul. Paul is in bonds but yet is given freedom. The Gospel goes forth. All that go to Paul and his Gospel will be received. Paul ministered to the Jews first. It pictures the gospel of God's grace going to the Jew after the rapture of the Church. Paul testifies to the Jews of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Paul's message was the Gospel and now it is the Kingdom of God which will be given out during the millennial reign. There is no benediction or no ending in Acts because the book of Acts is still going on today. The Acts of the Apostles is still being written in our lives today.

Tonight's Comments

Key Lessons from Acts 28:

1. Trials refine us, not define us.
 - Paul's resilience shows that hardships are opportunities for faith to grow.
2. Faith overcomes opposition.
 - The viper couldn't harm Paul—believers must shake off attacks and trust God's protection.
3. God's power is displayed in how we respond to suffering.
 - People watch how we handle trials; our endurance can become a testimony.
4. The Gospel is for all people.
 - Paul's journey signifies the transition from the Jewish focus to a worldwide mission.
5. Be a servant, not just a leader.
 - Paul gathering sticks reminds us that humility and service matter in God's Kingdom.
6. Healing and miracles are opportunities, but faith is the real goal.
 - Despite miracles, salvation is not automatic—faith must be personal.
7. The Acts of the Apostles continues today.

- The Gospel's work is ongoing, and each believer is part of God's mission.