

# ACTS

by Donnie V. Rader



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## Introduction to the Book of Acts

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Before delving into a study of any book of the Bible, a proper introduction is helpful. To jump into a study of the text without a little background information is like starting a conversation with a person without knowing who they are.

### The Author

The writer of this book is Luke, the author of the gospel of Luke. He refers to the “former account” written to Theophilus (Acts 1:1), which was the third gospel. Early writers like Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian credit Luke with this book. There is a similarity of style, phrases and arrangement to the gospel of Luke. The writer was a close associate of Paul. He was with Paul in part of his travels (note the “we” in Acts 16:10 and 20:6). The “we” could not be Silas or Timothy (Acts 16:19; 20:4-5). There is no evidence that it was Titus. Most likely it is Luke.

What do we know about Luke? There are only three references to him: Col. 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4:11. He was a physician (Col. 4:14). He is the only Gentile writer of the New Testament (Col. 4:11-12, 14).

Luke was an eyewitness to much of what he wrote. Notice the use of “we” from chapter 16 on. Some of his information would be received from reliable witnesses (chapters 1-15). In all his writing he was inspired (2 Tim. 3:16).

### The Recipient of the Book

This book was written to Theophilus (Acts 1:1). He was the one to whom the book of Luke was addressed (Luke 1:3). He was possibly a high official in the Roman government and was called “most excellent” (Luke 1:3). Some suggest that Theophilus may not be his real name and could be a name used to protect his identity. It means “lover of God.”

### When Was the Book Written?

Paul was imprisoned in Rome for the first time about 61-63. Since the book closes there, it could not have been written before then. Luke doesn’t tell us anything about what happened beyond that point.

Acts covers about 30 years (33 A.D. to 63. A.D.).

### The Value of the Book of Acts

Without the book of Acts we would have no information about the early church. We would know nothing about its beginning or its growth. We would have a “blank in our knowledge which scarcely anything else could have filled up.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 Frederick Farrar as quoted by J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, Vol. 6, 22.

The book provides a bridge between the gospels and the epistles. Adolf Harnack calls it the “pivotal book” of the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> “If the book of Acts were gone, there would be nothing to replace it; and we may go further, that the Christian Scriptures would then lie before us in two disjointed fragments; the complete arch would not be built.”<sup>3</sup> It gives us a narrative background against which the writings of Paul can be better understood. It shows us the Jewish rejection and the Gentile accepting of the religion of Christ. It shows us the work of the Holy Spirit in the first century.

Acts gives us an accurate history (Luke 1:1-3). In the late 1800s Sir William Ramsay led an archaeological expedition set to disprove Luke’s accuracy. In the process he was convinced that Luke was absolutely correct and published his conclusions in *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*.<sup>4</sup>

## Theme and Contents

The theme of the book may be found in Acts 1:8. It is about the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to all of the world in fulfillment of the great commission. William Barclay credits C. H. Turner with dividing the book into what he calls six panels, each ending with a progress report.

Panel 1	1:1 – 6:7
Panel 2	6:8 – 9:31
Panel 3	9:32 – 12:24
Panel 4	12:25 – 16:5
Panel 5	16:6 – 19:20
Panel 6	19:21 – 28:31

There are two focal points in Acts. The first, chapters 1-12, is about the gospel to the Jews. The second, chapters 13-28, is about the gospel to the Gentiles. It is a book about conversion (and some cases of non-conversion).

This book is a summary history. Dr. Hackett said it is “...a summary history of the origin, gradual increase, and extension of the Christian Church, through the instrumentality, chiefly of the Apostles Peter and Paul.”<sup>5</sup>

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2 Quoted by F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 17.

3 Howson, quoted by J. Sidlow Baxter, *ibid.* Vol. 6, 22.

4 See Johnny Stringer, *Truth Commentaries The Book of Acts*, xiv.

5 Quoted by J. W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*, 3.

## **Outline of the Book** ***From Jerusalem to All the World***

### **I. The Gospel in Palestine (1-12)**

- A. *In Jerusalem* (1-7)
  - 1. Preparing the apostles for their work (1)
  - 2. The beginning of the gospel (2)
  - 3. Opposition and persecution (3-7)
- B. *In Judea and Samaria* (8-12)
  - 1. Conversions (8-11)
    - a. Samaritans and Simon (8)
    - b. Eunuch (8)
    - c. Saul (9)
    - d. Cornelius (10-11)
  - 2. Establishment of the church at Antioch (11)
  - 3. Herod persecutes the church (12)

### **II. The Gospel to the Uttermost Parts of the World (13-28)**

- A. *The first missionary journey* (13-14)
- B. *The Jerusalem discussion about circumcision* (15)
- C. *The second missionary journey* (16-18)
- D. *The third missionary journey* (19-20)
- E. *Paul's trials and journey to Rome* (21-28)





**Acts 1****Lesson 1**  
**Preparing the Apostles for Their Work****Outline****I. The Promise of the Spirit** (vv. 1-8)

- A. *Luke connects this to his first book* (vv. 1-2)
- B. *Jesus gave instructions to the Apostles after his resurrection* (vv. 3-8)
  - 1. Was with them forty days (v. 3)
    - a. Presented himself alive by many infallible proofs
    - b. Spoke of things pertaining to kingdom of God
  - 2. Waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Spirit (vv. 4-5)
  - 3. Shall be witnesses (vv. 6-8)
    - a. In Jerusalem
    - b. In Judea and Samaria
    - c. Uttermost parts of the earth

**II. The Ascension** (vv. 9-11)

- A. *Jesus taken up out of their sight* (v. 9)
- B. *The promise of his return* (vv. 10-11)

**III. The Appointment of Matthias** (vv. 12-26)

- A. *Prayer in the upper room in Jerusalem* (vv. 12-14)
- B. *Peter speaks concerning Judas and selecting a new apostle* (vv. 15-22)
  - 1. The fall of Judas (vv. 15-20)
  - 2. Qualifications for a new apostle (vv. 21-22)
- C. *They chose Matthias* (vv. 23-26)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 1:8**

*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;  
and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,  
and to the end of the earth.*

In this study, a chapter title is given to each chapter of Acts. Chapter one is "Preparing the Apostles for Their Work." In it the Lord prepares the apostles to do the work of spreading the gospel.

The chapter begins by connecting this book to Luke's previous book, the gospel of Luke (vv. 1-2). In that book he recorded what Jesus did and taught until he ascended just after the great commission (v. 2).

### **Jesus Gives Instructions to the Apostles after His Resurrection (vv. 3-8)**

Following his resurrection, Jesus spent forty days with his apostles. During that time he presented many undeniable proofs that he was the one who was crucified and indeed raised from the dead (v. 3). Secondly, he taught about things pertaining to the kingdom of God (v. 3). Since the church (the kingdom) is God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10-11), then it is essential that those who preach God's eternal plan understand the nature of the kingdom of God.

These men were instructed to wait in Jerusalem (cf. Luke 24:47) for the promise that the Father had given them, the baptism of the Holy Spirit (vv. 4-5). God had promised that he would pour his Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28-32). When the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2), Peter said it was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (Acts 2:16-21). Jesus had promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would be sent from the Father to guide them into all truth (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13; Matt. 3:11).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise, not a command.<sup>1</sup> The promise was given to the apostles, not all believers. The "you" (v. 5) refers back to the "apostles" (v. 2). In the next chapter of Acts, it is documented by the text that it was the apostles who received it.

The apostles asked if it was time for the Lord to restore the kingdom to Israel (v. 6). Their question reflected their misconception about the nature of the kingdom, thinking it was a material kingdom. Apparently they were expecting some kind of earthly kingdom prior to his death. When he was crucified, their hope of such a kingdom was gone (cf. Luke 24:21). Now that he had been raised, they had hope that the kingdom would be restored to the glory days of David and Solomon.

Jesus did not immediately address their misunderstanding about the kingdom (v. 7). Perhaps, that was due to the fact that he had spent so much time teaching about the kingdom (v. 3). For the time being, he told them to leave the matter (of time) to God (v.7). All they needed to know was that the Holy Spirit was coming upon them (v. 8).

When the Holy Spirit would come upon the Apostles, they would be guided to be witnesses (giving eye witness testimony) of the resurrection of Christ (v. 8). Their work would begin in Jerusalem (1-7), then spread to the rest of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12) and on to the rest of the world (chapters 13-28).

### **The Ascension (vv. 9-11)**

After Jesus had given instructions to his apostles, he ascended in a cloud up into heaven (v. 9). When he ascended into heaven he sat down on the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20) where Daniel said he would be given a kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14).

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, it is not the same as water baptism (Acts 10:47-48).

While they stood looking into heaven, two men (angels) announced that he would return in the same manner he left (vv. 10-11). The second coming would be just as visible and real as the ascension.

These verses serve to challenge every believer, as it did the apostles, to busy themselves in the service of the Lord. Rather than stand gazing into things beyond our knowledge or control, get busy in view of his coming again.

## **The Appointment of Matthias (vv. 12-26)**

After the ascension at the Mount called Olivet (v. 12) the apostles went to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> The eleven gathered in an upper room and spent time in prayer along with the women<sup>3</sup> and Jesus' mother and brothers (v. 14).

During the time between the ascension and Pentecost, Peter addressed the disciples (about 120 who were gathered) about the need to appoint another apostle since the fall of Judas. He made two points.

1. *The fall of Judas (vv. 15-20)*. Peter said the Holy Spirit spoke by David<sup>4</sup> concerning Judas' betrayal of Jesus (v. 16).<sup>5</sup> Judas had been an apostle of equal standing with the rest (v. 17). However, he not only betrayed the Lord, but hung himself (Matt. 27:5) and in the process fell headlong, burst his body open and out gushed his intestines (v. 18). The money he obtained in the betrayal was used to buy a field that became known as Akel Dama which is Aramaic and means "the field of blood" (v. 19).<sup>6</sup>

Peter quoted Psalm 69:25 which did not specifically refer to Judas, but certainly would include him as an enemy of God. God will bring judgment and desolation upon his enemies. He also quoted Psalm 109:8 which said another would take his place. From that Peter concluded it was time to select one to take Judas' place.

2. *Qualifications for a new apostle (vv. 21-22)*. Peter said that a new apostle should be chosen from among those who had been with them from the baptism of John until the ascension (v. 21). To be qualified, he must be a witness of the resurrection of Christ (v. 22).

The disciples proposed two men, Joseph and Matthias (v. 23). They prayed for the Lord to choose which of the two he wanted (vv. 24-25). They cast lots<sup>7</sup> and Matthias was chosen (v. 26).

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2 The mount called Olivet was a Sabbath day's journey which was less than a mile.

3 "The women that had followed the Lord Jesus from Galilee, Luke 8:2-3,23,49,55; 24:10; Matt 27:55. The women particularly mentioned are Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, the mother of Zebedee's children, Joanna the wife of Chuza, and Susanna. Besides these, there were others whose names are not mentioned" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

4 An affirmation of inspiration.

5 Probably a reference to Psalm 41:9. See John 13:18.

6 See Matthew 27:5-8.

7 Different methods were used. "But which of the several ways in which the lot was taken was adopted on the present occasion, is hardly worth inquiring" (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft). However, the choice was made by God..

With the instructions the Lord had given and now with twelve apostles, they were ready to do the work that begins in the next chapter.

## Questions

1. What was done to prepare the apostles for their work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What kind of proofs could Jesus have given of his resurrection (v. 3)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What would "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (v. 3) include? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What other passages (besides Acts 1) promise the Holy Spirit to come upon the apostles?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What concept did the apostles have about the kingdom (v. 6)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How did Jesus respond to the apostles' question (vv. 6-7)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How did the ascension relate to preparing the apostles for their work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What did the apostles do in the period after Jesus ascended into heaven? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How do Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8 apply to Judas? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What qualification(s) had to be met for Matthias to be an apostle? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 2****Lesson 2  
The Beginning****Outline****I. The Reception of the Holy Spirit** (vv. 1-13)

- A. *The apostles received the Spirit and spoke in tongues* (vv. 1-4)
- B. *The multitude was amazed* (vv. 5-13)

**II. Peter's Sermon** (vv. 14-36)

- A. *Explanation of the events* (vv. 14-21)
- B. *Jesus was raised from the dead* (vv. 22-36)
  - 1. The one you crucified was raised (vv. 22-24)
  - 2. David prophesied of this (vv. 25-31)
  - 3. Exalted as both Lord and Christ (vv. 32-36)

**III. Response of the Multitude** (vv. 37-41)

- A. *They asked what to do* (vv. 37-40)
  - 1. The question (v. 37)
  - 2. The answer (vv. 38-40)
    - a. Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (vv. 38-39)
    - b. Save yourself (v. 40)
- B. *They gladly received the word and obeyed* (v. 41)

**IV. The Disciples Continued in the Apostles Doctrine** (vv. 42-47)

- A. *Followed the apostles' authority* (v. 42)
- B. *Were steadfast* (v. 42)
- C. *Worshiped* (v. 42)
- D. *Feared* (v. 43)
- E. *Took care of the needy* (vv. 44-45)
- F. *Served daily* (v. 46)
- G. *Grew* (v. 47)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 2:41**

*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized;  
and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*

The apostle Peter later looks back and refers to the events of this chapter as “the beginning” (Acts 11:15). Thus, this becomes a pivotal chapter.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter the gospel is preached for the first time under the Great Commission. The first Christians are found and the church is established in this chapter.

## **The Reception of the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-13)**

*The apostles received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues* (vv. 1-4). The day of Pentecost was one of three annual feasts for the Jews. It was also called the Feast of Weeks (Exo. 34:22; Deut. 16:10), Feast of Harvest (Exo. 23:16), and the day of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:17). Pentecost fell on the first day of the week.<sup>2</sup>

The apostles were told to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit fell upon them (Acts 1:5-8). The promise was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came upon them and they began to speak in tongues. The “they” (vv. 1-4) who were filled with the Spirit refers back to the nearest antecedent, the “apostles” (1:26).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, those who spoke in tongues were all Galileans (v. 7). The apostles were all men of Galilee (Acts 1:11).<sup>4</sup>

The coming of the Spirit was accompanied by the sound as a mighty wind and divided (split) tongues that were like fire upon each of the apostles.

To speak in tongues was to speak in an intelligible language (vv. 6, 8). Those who heard knew the wonderful words of God had been spoken (v. 11). The apostles were able to speak in languages they did not know by the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 4).

*The multitude was amazed* (vv. 5-13). Those who had gathered (from every nation) were amazed that these men<sup>5</sup> (of Galilee) were able to speak in their own tongue. They talked among themselves about the meaning of this (v. 12). Some charged that the apostles were drunk (v. 13).

## **Peter’s Sermon (vv. 14-36)**

*An explanation of the events* (vv. 14-21). Peter reasoned that these men could not be drunk since it was only the third hour (9:00 am). If they were drinking, they would not have had enough to be drunk by this hour.

What they were witnessing is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (2:28-32). The prophet said God would pour out his Spirit in the last days (v. 17).<sup>6</sup> The prophecy tells of the Spirit’s work in three areas:

- 
- 1 James D. Bales wrote a book on Acts 2 calling it *The Hub of the Bible*.
  - 2 Leviticus 23:16.
  - 3 It does not refer to the 120 (Acts 1) as those who claim Holy Spirit Baptism today affirm.
  - 4 It is not likely that all the 120 were from Galilee.
  - 5 The plural “these” (v. 7), “them” (v. 11) and “they” (v. 13) tells us that all the Apostles were speaking and not just Peter. Not all would be speaking at the same time (1 Cor. 14:27). They either took turns or were divided into various groups as we would divide for Bible classes.
  - 6 “This is what” (v. 16) shows that the events of Pentecost were included in the “last days.” This refers to the last dispensation (from Pentecost until the end of time). The “last days” do not refer to a short period of time just before the world ends.

1. **Revelation** (vv. 17-18). Prophecy, visions and dreams were means of God revealing His will to man. Thus, the Spirit's work involved the revelation of God's word. As the apostles preached on Pentecost the Spirit was revealing God's will.
2. **Confirmation** (vv. 19-20). "Wonders" and "signs" (v. 19) were miraculous measures that confirmed the revealed will of God (cf. Mark 16:17-20). The "day of the Lord" (v. 20) refers to a day of judgment. Some think it refers to the final judgment. Others think it refers to God's judgment in the destruction of Jerusalem. It probably refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. Similar language is used in the Old Testament to refer to the fall of Babylon (Isa. 13:10).
3. **Salvation** (v. 21). This is how the prophecy related to those who heard Peter preach. This would be a time when men could be saved. Joel's prophecy said that whoever "calls" on the name of the Lord will be saved. At the end of the chapter (vv. 41, 47) three thousand were saved. So, whatever they did between verse 21 and verse 47 was involved in calling on the name of the Lord. They heard the message (v. 22). They were told to believe (v. 36). They were told to repent and be baptized (v. 38). That is what they did (v. 41).

*Jesus is raised from the dead* (vv. 22-36). Peter now moved to the heart of his sermon affirming the resurrection of Christ. He makes three points:

1. **The one you crucified was raised from the dead** (vv. 22-24). Jesus of Nazareth was proven to be who he claimed to be by the miracles, wonders and signs he performed (v. 22). In spite of that, he was crucified (v. 23). Peter convicted his hearers of being guilty. However, God raised him from the dead (v. 24).
2. **David prophesied of this** (vv. 25-31). Peter quoted from Psalm 16:9-11 where David said the soul would not be left in Hades<sup>7</sup> nor allow the body to corrupt in the grave (v. 27).<sup>8</sup> Thus, the body and the spirit would be reunited (a resurrection). David was not talking about himself, because his body is still in the grave (v. 29). He was foretelling of the resurrection of Christ (vv. 30-31). Being raised from the dead, he now sits on the throne of David ruling over his spiritual kingdom.<sup>9</sup>
3. **He is now exalted as both Lord and Christ** (vv. 32-36). The eyewitness account of the apostles serves as further evidence of the resurrection (v. 32). The resurrection means that Jesus is now at the right hand of God (vv. 33-35), is Lord (v. 36, ruler and in authority), and Christ (v. 36, the anointed one). At this point Peter calls upon his listeners to believe (v. 36).

## **The Response of the Multitude (vv. 37-41)**

*They asked what to do* (vv. 37-40). Being convinced of the resurrection and convicted of their sin, the people asked what to do (v. 37). They were told to repent and be baptized for

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7 Realm of the departed spirits where the soul goes after death (cf. Luke 16:19-31).

8 The body and soul are separated at death (Ecc. 12:7; Jas. 2:26).

9 Psalm 89:36-37.

the remission of sins (v. 38).<sup>10</sup> When they did what they were told, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

*They gladly received the word and obeyed* (v. 41). Some 3,000 people believed and obeyed the gospel.

### **The Disciples Continued in the Apostles' Doctrine (vv. 42-47)**

McGarvey observed, "He closes this section of the history with a brief notice of the order established in the new church..."<sup>12</sup>

*They followed the apostles' doctrine* (v. 42). What the apostles taught was to be accepted as the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 4:1, 6). The teaching of the apostles was their standard of authority, not the prevailing views of the day or their own opinions.

*They were steadfast* (v. 42). They devoted themselves (ESV) continually (YLT)<sup>13</sup> to the things found in the apostles' instructions.

*They worshiped* (v. 42, 47). Breaking bread can mean a common meal (cf. v. 46), but here refers to the Lord's Supper (cf. Acts 20:7).<sup>14</sup> This is the first time disciples are carrying out what the Lord instituted (Matt. 26:26-30). They prayed (v. 42). Fellowship (v. 42) includes the contribution if it is not a specific reference to it.<sup>15</sup> They praised God (v. 47).

*They feared* (v. 43). Fear (awe ESV) was in the heart of the early Christians and others who witnessed what the apostles did.

*They took care of their own needy* (vv. 44-45). They divided to all who had need (v. 45b).<sup>16</sup> To be able to do this they sold their possessions (v. 45a). This showed how much they cared about their brethren and how devoted they were to the Lord. The attitude and spirit that drove them was, they had all things common (v. 44). It was an attitude that said "what is mine is yours."

*They served daily* (v. 46). They were together daily in the temple. Additionally, they shared common meals together.

*They grew* (v. 47). The Lord added those who were saved to the church.<sup>17</sup> This shows that the church and the saved are the same. This is the first reference to the church being in existence. All prior references to the church point to this day. All references after this day point back.

10 Some argue that "for the remission of sins" means because their sins were already forgiven. The same expression in English and Greek is found in Matthew 26:28 which cannot be so interpreted.

11 Not the Holy Spirit as a gift, but the gift of salvation from the Spirit (cf. John 4:10; Eph. 4:7).

12 J. W. McGarvey, *New Commentary on Acts*, 46.

13 Young's Literal Translation.

14 This is the first day of the week, since Pentecost fell on that day.

15 The same word is translated contribution (Rom. 15:26, KJV). Alexander Campbell rendered this "contribution" (*The Book of Acts according to Alexander Campbell: An Historical Rhetorical Commentary, Book 1, 290*).

16 This is church action as in Acts 4, 6, 11.

17 One is *added* to the church. One does not *join* the church.



## Questions

1. What was Pentecost and when did it occur? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How do we know it was only the apostles who received the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-4)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Define speaking in tongues giving evidence from the context. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What evidence did Peter give that the apostles were not drunk? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did Joel's prophecy relate to the events of the day? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What were the three areas of the work of the Spirit revealed in Joel's prophecy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How does the context of Acts 2 explain what it means to call on the name of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How did Peter prove that Psalm 16:8-11 was not talking about David himself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Find verses that show the people were told to:

- hear \_\_\_\_\_,
- believe \_\_\_\_\_,
- repent \_\_\_\_\_,
- be baptized \_\_\_\_\_.

10. What does verse 47 teach us about the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 3****Lesson 3  
Healing of the Lame Man and a Sermon on Christ****Outline****I. Healing of the Lame Man (vv. 1-11)**

- A. *The lame man expected money from Peter and John (vv. 1-5)*
- B. *Peter healed the lame man (vv. 6-8)*
- C. *The people who saw it were amazed (vv. 9-11)*

**II. Peter's Sermon about Jesus (vv. 12-26)**

- A. *Jesus: The suffering servant (vv. 12-21)*
  - 1. This miracle was not by our own power (v. 12)
  - 2. You killed God's servant (vv. 13-15a, 17-18)
    - a. You denied the Holy One and released a murderer (vv. 13-14)
    - b. You killed the prince of life (v. 15)
    - c. Through your ignorance (v. 17)
    - d. Foretold by the prophets that he must suffer (v. 18)
  - 3. God raised him (v. 15b)
  - 4. Through Christ – this lame man was healed (v. 16)
  - 5. Therefore, repent and be converted (vv. 19-21)
- B. *Jesus: the prophet of prophecy (vv. 22-24)*
  - 1. Moses (vv. 22-23)
    - a. God would raise up a prophet like him (v. 22)
    - b. If you don't hear him – you will be destroyed (v. 23)
  - 2. Samuel and others (v. 24).
- C. *Jesus: the seed of Abraham (vv. 25-26)*
  - 1. The promise to Abraham (v. 25)
  - 2. God raised up Christ to bless you in turning you away from sin (v. 26)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 3:16**

*And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

In this chapter the apostles work a miracle which creates an occasion for another sermon about Jesus, his death and resurrection, and what it means.

### Healing of the Lame Man (vv. 1-11)

*The lame man expected money from Peter and John* (vv. 1-5). As Peter and John went to the temple (about 3 PM), they passed by a lame man begging for money. The man was at least 40 years old (Acts 4:22) and had been lame since birth (v. 2). He had to be carried to the door of the temple where he sat every day begging (v. 2). Seeing Peter and John he asked them for money (v. 3). Even after they spoke to him (v. 4), he thought they were about to hand him some money (v. 5). He was not asking for or expecting a miracle.

*Peter healed the lame man* (vv. 6-8). Peter explained that he didn't have silver and gold to give him, but he would give him something far greater.<sup>1</sup> He told him to get up and walk by the power of Jesus Christ (v. 6). Immediately, the man (who had been lame) was healed, started walking, leaping and praising God (vv. 7-8).

*The people who saw were amazed* (vv. 9-11). Knowing that this was the same man who always sat at the Beautiful Gate, the people who saw him leaping were filled with wonder and amazement.

From this chapter the nature of true miracles is seen as opposed to the claims of modern day miracles. (1) This miracle was *immediate* (v. 7). It didn't take time for the man to get better. (2) It was *complete* (v. 16). The man was restored to "perfect soundness." (3) It was *evident to all* (vv. 9, 16). The people were not merely told about a miracle somewhere. It did not involve something that could not be seen by all. (4) *Faith* required was on the part of the *performer* (v. 16). The lame man was not expecting a miracle (v. 5). He had no basis for faith. There is no evidence he had faith (prior to the miracle).<sup>2</sup>

### Peter's Sermon about Jesus (vv. 12-26)

The amazement of the people served as an occasion for Peter to explain that it was not by their own power that the apostles healed this man, but by the power of Jesus who was raised from the dead (vv. 12, 16).<sup>3</sup> His sermon has three main points.

*Jesus: the suffering servant* (vv. 12-21). The miracle was possible because God glorified his servant, Jesus, by raising him from the dead (vv. 13-15). This Jesus is the very one that

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- 1 From this verse (v. 6) we learn a practical lesson: there are some things worth more than silver and gold (one's soul, forgiveness, hope, a good name, etc.).
  - 2 When the disciples failed to work a miracle, the Lord said it was *their* lack of faith, not the recipient of the miracle (Matt. 17:14-21).
  - 3 "They never regarded themselves as the sources of power but only as channels of power. They were well aware of the limitations of what they could do. They were also well aware that there was no limitations to what the Risen Christ could do through them and with them. Therein lies the secret of the Christian life. The Christian knows that so long as he thinks of what I can do and what I can be, there will be nothing but failure and frustration and fear; but when he thinks of 'not I, but Christ in me' there can be nothing but peace and power" (William Barclay, *Acts of the Apostles*, 30-31).

they had delivered up and denied before Pilate (even though he was the Holy One and the Just), while asking that a murderer be released (vv. 13-15). They killed the prince of life (v. 15a). They did it in ignorance (v. 17).<sup>4</sup> The prophets foretold that he would suffer (v. 18; cf. Psa. 22; Isa. 53; Dan. 9:26).

God raised him from the dead which can be established by eyewitness testimony (v. 15b). It is through the risen Christ that this man was healed (v. 16).

This calls for repentance and obedience (v. 19). This verse is parallel with Acts 2:38. “Be converted” is here in the place of “be baptized”.<sup>5</sup> “That your sins may be blotted out” is parallel with the “remission of sins”. When one is baptized, a time of refreshing (parallel to “gift of the Holy Spirit”)<sup>6</sup> comes from the Lord. This is a spiritual refreshing that comes when the burden of sin is gone.

This risen savior, Jesus Christ, God will send again (v. 20).<sup>7</sup> He will remain in heaven until the “restoration of all things” which was foretold by the prophets (v. 21). The restoration of all things refers to the work of the Christ in saving man as foretold in the Old Testament.<sup>8</sup> This work has begun, but is not yet complete. The first coming marks the beginning; the second coming marks the end.

*Jesus: the prophet of prophecy* (vv. 22-24). Moses foretold that God would raise up a prophet like him (Deut. 18:15-19). Jesus is that prophet. The two prophets are alike in many ways. Both were leaders, prophets, law-givers, and mediators. Since Jesus is the prophet of prophecy, we should hear him in all that he says.<sup>9</sup> One who doesn’t hear and heed him will be punished (v. 23). All the prophets from Samuel on foretold of these days (the day of the Messiah).

*Jesus: the seed of Abraham* (vv. 25-26). Those whom Peter addressed were “sons of the prophets, and of the covenant” because they were heirs of all blessings and benefits from what the prophets foretold and from the covenant made with Abraham. God’s promise to Abraham was that all families of the earth would be blessed in his seed (Gen. 12:1-3). The seed is identified as Jesus (v. 26). All families of the earth (Jews and Gentiles) are blessed in Jesus by turning away from sin (v. 26).

This was a powerful sermon that did more than inform people about Christ, it called for obedience to Him.

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4 Ignorance did not excuse or exempt them from sin. They still had to repent of their wrong (v. 19).

5 Thus, baptism is the point at which conversion takes place. It is then that one receives the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

6 A reference to salvation as a gift from the Spirit (Acts 2:38).

7 This is the second coming.

8 The context helps us understand the “restoration of all things”. It was foretold by the prophets (v. 21). The prophets foretold of “these days” (v. 24) in which all nations would be blessed (v. 25) by men turning from their iniquities (v. 26).

9 Hearing involves more than listening. It includes obedience.

### Questions

1. What do we know about the man who was healed that proves that an obvious miracle was performed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. List four things this chapter states about the nature of true miracles. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the man do when he was healed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How did the miracles lead into a sermon on Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What were the three points of Peter's sermon? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What evidence is given of the resurrection of Christ in this sermon? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How would you answer the idea that ignorance excuses our actions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What does "be converted" (v. 19) mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What is the "refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (v. 19)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the "restoration of all things" (v. 21)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 4****Lesson 4  
Peter and John before the Council****Outline****I. Peter and John Questioned by the Council (vv. 1-22)**

- A. *Arrested* (vv. 1-4)
  1. Because they preached the resurrection (vv. 1-3)
  2. Yet, many believed and obeyed (v. 4)
- B. *Questioned* (vv. 5-12)
  1. Question: By what power or name was this done (vv. 5-7)?
  2. Answer: By Jesus Christ (vv. 8-12)
    - a. Man is healed by the name of Christ who was crucified and raised (vv. 8-10)
    - b. He is the rejected stone that became the chief cornerstone (v. 11)
    - c. No salvation in any other name (v. 12)
- C. *Reaction of the council* (vv. 13-22)
  1. Marveled (v. 13a)
  2. Realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus (v. 13b)
  3. Admitted that a miracle had been performed (vv. 14-16)
  4. Threatened Peter and John (vv. 17-22)
    - a. Commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus (vv. 17-18)
    - b. Peter and John said they could not but speak the things they saw and heard (vv. 19-20)
    - c. Let them go after more threats (vv. 21-22)

**II. Reaction of the Disciples (vv. 23-31)**

- A. *Peter and John reported to the disciples* (v. 23)
- B. *The disciples prayed for boldness* (vv. 24-30)
- C. *The results of the prayer* (v. 31)
  1. Place shook
  2. Filled with Spirit
  3. Spoke the word with boldness

**III. The Commitment of the Disciples (vv. 32-37)**

- A. *To unity* (v. 32a)
- B. *To one another* [benevolence] (vv. 32b, 34-37)
- C. *To the proclamation of the gospel* (v. 33)

## Key Verse That Summarizes the Chapter

### Acts 4:2

*Being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

The preaching about the resurrection and the healing of the lame man was more than the Jewish leaders could take. Because of what Peter and John had done in the previous chapter, they are arrested and questioned.

### Peter and John Questioned by the Council (vv. 1-22)

*Peter and John were arrested* (vv. 1-4). As Peter and John were preaching (the sermon in chapter 3), the captain of the temple,<sup>1</sup> and the Sadducees (who denied any resurrection, Acts 23:8) became annoyed at the teaching about the resurrection (vv. 1-2). So, they arrested them and held them for trial before the Sanhedrin the next day (v. 3).

In spite of the opposition, the gospel was effective (v. 4). Here we have a progress report. Many who heard believed.<sup>2</sup> The number came to be about 5,000 men.<sup>3</sup>

*Peter and John were questioned* (vv. 5-12). The next day the Sanhedrin Council (the highest court among the Jews) assembled to consider the case with Peter and John. The court consisted of rulers, elders and scribes with the high priest presiding over the court. Annas had been the high priest but was deposed by the Romans and Caiaphas (son-in-law to Annas) was now serving in his place. Annas was called the high priest because the Jews still thought of him as holding that office. We don't know who John and Alexander were, but they must have been in positions of authority.

The question was "By what power or by what name have you done this?" (v. 7). The council made no charge of wrong doing, but merely asked who authorized them to work the miracle (healing the lame man) and to teach about Jesus. What an opportunity the question provided. Peter told them it was all possible because of Jesus Christ (vv. 8-12). The helpless man had been healed by the power of Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead (vv. 8-10). He quoted Psalms 118:22 and applied the prophecy to Christ. He is the stone which was rejected, but chosen by God to be the chief cornerstone (v. 11). Peter concludes that salvation can be found in no other name<sup>4</sup> than Jesus Christ (v. 12). He is the way (John 14:6). Those who made up the Sanhedrin thought they were saved. And now they have heard a message that says believing and obeying the Christ is the only way to be saved.

1 "This was the commander of the guard stationed chiefly in the tower Antonia, especially during the great feasts; and it was his duty to preserve order and prevent any tumult" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

2 Believed does not mean they only had faith, but stands for obedience to what was preached (3:19). Consider how the term "obeyed" and "believed" are used interchangeably (Rom. 10:16).

3 This was the number of men, not counting the women. So, the total would be larger than that. This is probably a total including the 3,000 on Pentecost, rather than an additional 5,000.

4 The name of one stands for all their qualities, all they are, and thus their authority (cf. v. 7).



*The reaction of the council* (vv. 13-22). They marveled when they saw how bold and confident Peter and John were. They understood that these men were uneducated (had no formal training) and untrained (“ordinary” NIV; “common” RSV) men (v. 13). The council concluded that these men “had been with Jesus”.<sup>5</sup> They “realized what being with Jesus had done for them” (TLB). These men had the same message and the same boldness as Jesus.

The council members had to admit that a miracle had been performed (vv. 14-16). It could not be denied since the man (now healed) was standing with the apostles. They discussed the matter privately about what to do with them.

The decision was made to threaten them and command them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus (vv. 17-18). Peter and John appealed to the conscience of the rulers as to whose authority they should obey (v. 19). Then they affirmed their unstoppable determination to preach the truth (v. 20). They were absolutely convinced that the message was true. They felt compelled to do right no matter what.

The Sanhedrin couldn’t find a good way to punish the apostles since the crowd was praising God for the miracles of healing a man who had been lame for more than forty years (vv. 21-22). So they threatened them more and let them go.

### **The Reaction of the Disciples (vv. 23-31)**

*Peter and John reported to the disciples* (v. 23). When the council let Peter and John go, they gathered with other brethren<sup>6</sup> and reported what had been said to them.

*The disciples prayed for boldness* (vv. 24-30). The prayer began with the praise of God as one who made all things and thus controls all things. (v. 24). The opposition they had faced brought to mind David’s prophecy (Psa. 2:1-2) about how kings and rulers would oppose the Christ (vv. 25-26). That was fulfilled when Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and even the people of Israel rejected the Christ (vv. 27-28). In the midst of such hostility, there was a need for boldness. Thus, they prayed for boldness to speak the word (v. 29). Their prayer included a request for confirmation of their message through miracles (v. 30).

*The results of the prayer* (v. 31). When their prayer was finished, three things happened: (1) The place shook, (2) they were filled with the Spirit, and (3) they spoke the word with boldness.

### **The Commitment of the Disciples (vv. 32-37)**

*To unity* (v. 32a). These early disciples were united as one. This was evident in the care they had for one another (v. 32b, 34-36).

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5 Do people see things in your life that cause them to conclude you have been influenced by Jesus?

6 It is possible that those to whom Peter and John went is limited to the apostles. See Johnny Stringer, *Acts*, Truth Commentaries, 81.

*To one another* (v. 32b, 34-37). Just as they did in Acts 2, when a need arose they had all things common (v. 32a).<sup>7</sup> Thus, they sold lands and houses then brought the money to the apostles (vv. 34-35). The funds were then distributed to those in need (v. 35b).<sup>8</sup>

Among those who were generous in giving was Josep whom had been named Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”) by the apostles (vv. 36-37).

*To the proclamation of the gospel* (v. 33). Just as they prayed (cf. vv. 24-30), the apostles proclaimed the resurrection of Christ. That was the very thing the Sanhedrin had forbidden.

## Questions

1. Why were Peter and John arrested? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What was the progress report given in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What was the question the Sanhedrin asked Peter and John? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How did Peter and John answer the question before the council? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What does “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” mean (v. 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What amazed the council (v. 13)? \_\_\_\_\_

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7 This was simply an attitude that said, “What is mine is yours.”

8 This is church action as in Acts 2, 6, and 11.

7. What conclusion did the council draw about Peter and John (v. 13)? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Why was the Sanhedrin court forced to admit that a miracle had been performed? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How did the apostles react to the ultimatum given by the council? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. How does Psalm 2:1-2 relate to the prayer for boldness? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 5****Lesson 5  
The Apostles Imprisoned,  
Beaten, Kept Preaching****Outline****I. Ananias and Sapphira Lied and Were Punished** (vv. 1-11)

- A. *Kept part of the money they claimed to give* (vv. 1-2)
- B. *Peter rebuked them for lying and they fell dead* (vv. 3-10)
  - 1. Ananias (vv. 3-6)
  - 2. Sapphira (vv. 7-10)
- C. *Their punishment caused the church and others to fear* (v. 11)

**II. The Apostles Performed Miracles** (vv. 12-16)

- A. *Miracles and signs were done by the apostles* (vv. 12, 15-16)
- B. *Caused many to believe and obey* (vv. 13-14)

**III. Apostles Imprisoned, Questioned and Beaten** (vv. 17-40)

- A. *Imprisoned* (vv. 17-21a)
  - 1. Cast into prison (vv. 17-18)
  - 2. Released by an angel to go preach (vv. 19-21a)
- B. *Questioned by the council* (vv. 21b-39)
  - 1. Council gathered and sent for apostles (vv. 21b-26)
    - a. Council gathered (v. 21b)
    - b. Sent to prison for the apostles – they were not there, but preaching (vv. 22-25)
    - c. Brought the apostles to the council (v. 26)
  - 2. Apostles questioned about their continued teaching (vv. 27-28)
  - 3. Peter's defense (vv. 29-32)
    - a. Ought to obey God rather than men (v. 29)
    - b. God raised Jesus and exalted Him to give repentance and forgiveness (vv. 30-32)
  - 4. Gamaliel's advice (vv. 33-39)
    - a. Council wanted to kill them (v. 33)
    - b. Gamaliel said: leave them alone (vv. 34-39)
      - 1.) If of man – come to nothing (vv. 34-38)
      - 2.) If of God – cannot overthrow it (v. 39)
- C. *Beaten, commanded not to teach and then let them go* (v. 40)

**IV. Apostles Continued to Preach Christ** (vv. 41-42)

- A. *Rejoiced, being counted worthy to suffer* (v. 41)
- B. *Did not cease preaching Christ* (v. 42)

## Key Verses That Summarize the Chapter

### Acts 5:41-42

*41 So 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 did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

Chapter five gives us a clear picture of God's intent for the early church: Sin and hypocrisy are not to be tolerated (vv. 1-11), the gospel is to be preached (vv. 19-21, 41-42), and God's people are to press on with courage (v. 29).

### Ananias and Sapphira Lie and Are Punished (vv. 1-11)

The situation with Ananias and Sapphira is the first case of church trouble, the first record of sin among God's people, and the first case of hypocrisy.

*They kept back part of the money they claimed to give* (vv. 1-2). This chapter begins with "but" which shows a contrast between the previous example of Barnabas and the present example of Ananias and Sapphira. "The two illustrations here were intended to be brought in contrast, as the conjunction 'but' introduces the sentence."<sup>1</sup> Ananias and Sapphira sold some land (as Barnabas and others have done). Ananias kept part of the money, but said he was giving the full amount when he brought it to the apostles. Sapphira was fully aware of what he had done.<sup>2</sup>

*Peter rebuked them for lying and they fell dead* (vv. 3-10). When Ananias brought the money, Sapphira was not with him (v. 7). Peter rebuked Ananias for allowing Satan to fill his heart (v. 3). However, he had conceived this plan on his own (v. 4). He allowed Satan to influence him by yielding to the temptation to lie about the money.

In his hypocrisy, Ananias was focusing on how he appeared before men. Peter pointed out that his lying was not just to men, but to God (vv. 3-4). There was no reason for this sin. He voluntarily participated in it (v. 4). There was no compulsion to sell. There was no pressure to give what he gained from selling. There was no demand to give all or even a certain amount. The whole matter was willfully planned (v. 4). Consequently, he was miraculously struck dead (vv. 5-6).

Three hours later Sapphira came in being unaware of what had happened to her husband (v. 7). Peter gave her the opportunity to come clean and correct her part of the sin. He asked her about the amount they claimed to give. She said the amount they received from the land was the amount they gave (v. 7-8)<sup>3</sup>. She was an accomplice to Ananias' sin<sup>4</sup>. Though

1 H. Leo Boles, *Acts*, Gospel Advocate Commentary series, 77.

2 She was an accomplice with him and was just as guilty as he was (cf. v. 10).

3 They pretended to be doing more than they were. "We too may be pretending with a few outward deeds to be giving the Lord the best we have, when in reality we are holding back (Gal. 6:7-8)" (Robert Harkrider, *Acts*, 53).

4 Though we may not participate in another person's sin, we may well be an accomplice by consenting, advising, or tolerating it.

the idea was conceived by Ananias (v. 4), she was well aware of it (v. 2). She was not present when he lied about the amount (vv. 2-7). However, she was just as guilty and was struck dead just like her husband (v. 10).

*Their punishment caused the church and others to fear* (v. 11). This is a case of church discipline, though not a case of withdrawing. Sin was confronted. Some of the same results were obtained.<sup>5</sup> The rest of the church feared (vv. 5, 11). They learned that sin would not be tolerated. They had to be stirred to sincerity. It also caused some outside of the church to fear (v. 11).

## **The Apostles Perform Miracles (vv. 12-16)**

*Miracles and signs were done by the apostles* (vv. 12, 15-16). The apostles worked miracles among the people. The miracles were called “signs” because they served to confirm the message the apostles preached (Mark 16:17-20). They were called “wonders” because of the effect of amazement. They were all<sup>6</sup> gathered in Solomon’s Porch (v. 12).<sup>7</sup>

The healing done by the apostles became so popular that the sick were brought into the street so that at least the shadow of Peter might come over some of them (v. 15).<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the efforts today to perform miracles, *all* those that were brought to be healed were healed (v. 16).

*Caused many to believe and obey* (vv. 13-14). Those not gathered with the disciples (v. 12) didn’t dare join them, even though they esteemed them highly (v. 13). They didn’t join them for one of two reasons, or both: One, they didn’t feel that they fit in with those who were associated with such power as displayed in the miracles. Two, they had just witnessed the hypocrites being exposed (vv. 1-11). There were multitudes that were obedient and turned to the Lord (v. 14). Here we have another progress report.

## **Apostles Imprisoned, Questioned and Beaten (vv. 17-40)**

*Imprisoned* (vv. 17-21a). The popularity of the apostles was more than the leaders among the Jews could take. The high priest (a Sadducee) along with other Sadducees (who denied the resurrection) took the apostles and put them in prison (vv. 17-18). However, an angel released them and commanded the apostles to go preach “all the words of this life” in the temple (vv. 19-21a).

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5 The church was purified or cleansed of its hypocrisy (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6-7).

6 This may refer to all Christians and not just the apostles.

7 Solomon’s Porch “was on the east side of the court of the Gentiles (Josephus, Ant. XX. 9, 7) and was so called because it was built upon a remnant of the foundations of the ancient temple. Jesus had once taught here (John 10:23)” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

8 “The sacred author does not tell us that any of the people upon whom Peter’s shadow fell were healed; and from this it would appear that the purpose of including this is to emphasize the overwhelming popularity that attached to the Twelve” (Burton Coffman, *Acts*, James Burton Coffman Commentaries, 109).

*Questioned by the council* (vv. 21b-39). Once again the apostles were brought before the council for questioning.

1. **The council gathered and sent for the apostles** (vv. 21b-26). The Sanhedrin council officially gathered and had the apostles brought to them (v. 21b). However, when the officers came back to the council they reported that the prison was secured tight with guards outside, but the apostles were not inside (vv. 22-23). The main concern the officials had was the effect of their escape (v. 24). They were fearful that this may cause a greater following. To make matters worse for the council, someone reported that the apostles were preaching in the temple (v. 25). This time when the officers took them they didn't use force<sup>9</sup> because they were afraid of being stoned by those who held the apostles in high esteem (v. 26).
2. **The apostles questioned about their continued teaching** (vv. 27-28). The high priest asked, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?" (v. 28).<sup>10</sup> He charged them with violating the prohibition to the point of filling Jerusalem with their doctrine, which included indicting them with the death of Christ (v. 28).
3. **Peter's defense** (vv. 29-32). Peter (and the other apostles) responded with two points. First, they would obey God (who commanded them to preach), rather than man (who had forbidden them to preach) (v. 29). Secondly, God raised up the same Jesus whom you murdered (v. 30). The apostles did not back off, but pressed the charge that these Jews had killed Jesus. Three things are stated about the resurrection: (a) Christ is now exalted to the right hand of God (v. 31). (b) He is Prince and Savior who forgives those who repent (v. 31). (c) There is evidence of this resurrection. The apostles were eyewitnesses (v. 32). The Holy Spirit gave testimony by way of the miracles (v. 32b).<sup>11</sup>
4. **Gamaliel's advice** (vv. 33-39). The council's reaction was anger to the point of planning to kill the apostles (v. 33). Gamaliel (a Pharisee, a council member, a teacher of the law and well respected)<sup>12</sup> had the apostles removed so the council could talk privately (v. 34). Gamaliel's advice was to leave them alone. If what the apostles are doing is of men, it will come to nothing (vv. 34-38). He gives two cases (Theudas and Judas) where men led in movements that amounted to nothing. If, however, what these men are doing is of God, it cannot be overthrown (v. 39).

Gamaliel was not acting in defense of the apostles or showing any support for the doctrine of Christ. His only concern was how the council should handle the matter for its own benefit.

*The apostles were beaten, commanded not to teach and then let go* (v. 40). The rest of the council agreed with Gamaliel. So they beat the apostles,<sup>13</sup> commanded them not to teach in the name of Jesus and then let them go.

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9 NIV and ESV.

10 The ASV renders this as a statement rather than a question, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

11 The Holy Spirit being given to those who obey him refers to the apostles. They would have the power of the Spirit as long as they obeyed God and not bow to the pressures of men (cf. v. 29).

12 Paul was a student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; 26:5).

13 Usually the beating was 39 stripes (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24).



## The Apostles Continue to Preach Christ (vv. 41-42)

*They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer* (v. 41). The beating and threats of the council didn't stop the apostles. They viewed it as an honor to suffer for Christ.

*They did not cease to preach Christ* (v. 42). The apostles had the boldness they prayed for because of the attitude described in verse 41. They continued to daily preach Christ.

### Questions

1. What contrast(s) can be drawn between Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did Ananias and Sapphira have to sell their land? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did Ananias and Sapphira have to give all of the money they received from the sale of the land? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What drove Ananias and Sapphira to lie about the money they gave? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. In what ways can we become an accomplice to sin? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why did some not join the disciples (v. 13)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. What was the progress report found in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. Why was the council so concerned when they heard that the apostles had escaped from prison? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What was Peter's defense to the charge the council had made? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What was Gamaliel's advice and why did he give it? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 6****Lesson 6  
Seven Appointed and Stephen Arrested****Outline****I. Appointment of Seven Men to Care for Widows (vv. 1-7)**

- A. *The Hellenist widows were neglected (v. 1)*
- B. *Apostles told the brethren to choose seven men to care for the widows (vv. 2-4)*
  - 1. So the apostles would not have to leave their work in the word to serve tables (vv. 2, 4)
  - 2. Qualifications (v. 3)
    - a. Good report
    - b. Full of the Holy Spirit
    - c. Full of wisdom
- C. *Seven men were chosen and appointed (vv. 5-6)*
- D. *Many obeyed the gospel (v. 7)*

**II. Stephen Opposed and Arrested (vv. 8-15)**

- A. *Stephen worked miracles (v. 8)*
- B. *Stephen was opposed (vv. 9-11)*
  - 1. Disputed with him (v. 9)
  - 2. Couldn't resist his wisdom (v. 10)
  - 3. Charged him with blaspheming Moses and God (v. 11)
- C. *Stephen arrested and brought before the council (vv. 12-15)*
  - 1. False witnesses testified that he spoke against the holy place and the law (vv. 13-14)
  - 2. When the council looked on him they saw his face as the face of an angel (v. 15)

**Key Verses That Summarize the Chapter****Acts 6:3, 11**

*3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;*  
*11 Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."*

"As the church grew it began to encounter all the problems of an organization and an institution."<sup>1</sup> Indeed the church was facing growing pains. They already had dealt with problems from outside the church with the Sanhedrin council (Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-42) and problems from the inside with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).

In this chapter the church faces complaints from within (vv. 1-7), and false reports from without (vv. 8-15).

## **Appointment of Seven Men to Care for Widows (vv. 1-7)**

*The Hellenist widows were neglected* (v. 1). The fact that the church was rapidly growing (v. 1)<sup>2</sup> explained part of the difficulty in caring for those in need. The larger numbers meant it was more likely for someone to be overlooked. The Hellenists<sup>3</sup> complained against the Hebrews<sup>4</sup> because their widows had been neglected in the "daily serving of food" (NASV). Perhaps the social and cultural differences between these groups helped drive the problem.

There is no evidence that this neglect was intentional. If it were intentional, it would seem that a rebuke would be in order. If it were intentional, why didn't those responsible defend it? There was no rebuke to those who complained or to the rest of the disciples. "In the very nature of such distributions, it was inevitable that some should receive less, others more, and that almost any person desiring to find fault could easily have 'discovered' some basis for alleging it."<sup>5</sup>

*The apostles told the brethren to choose seven men to care for the widows* (vv. 2-4). So that the apostles would not have to neglect their work in the gospel, they instructed the brethren to select seven men to see to this (vv. 2, 4). These men were to be of good reputation (honorable men of character), full of the Holy Spirit (following the instructions of the Spirit), and full of wisdom (v.3).

*Seven men were chosen and appointed* (vv. 5-6). The church did what the apostles said and selected seven men and presented them to the apostles. We know very little or nothing about most of these men. Stephen is seen in the last section of this chapter and the next. Philip is mentioned in Acts 8:5-40 and 21:8. Nicolas was a proselyte<sup>6</sup> from Antioch. All of the seven have Greek names, suggesting that they too are Hellenist. The apostles laid their hands on the seven (v. 6).<sup>7</sup>

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1 William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 50.

2 Previous progress reports are found in Acts 4:4 and 5:14.

3 Hellenist (or Grecians, KJV) were Greek speaking Jews born and reared outside of Palestine.

4 Hebrews were Jews born and reared in Palestine and spoke the Hebrew language.

5 James Burton Coffman, *Acts*, 122.

6 A Gentile who had converted to Judaism.

7 There are two views concerning the laying on of hands in this verse: One view says the apostles laid hands upon them to impart spiritual gifts (cf. Acts 8:14-19). Evidence for this view is that Stephen worked miracles (v. 8). The other view says that this was a means of approving, endorsing and appointing them to their work (cf. Acts 13:3). Either is possible. This writer leans toward the latter view.

*Many obeyed the gospel* (v. 7). Here we have another progress report. The number was multiplied greatly. The fact that many priests were obedient tells us how effective the gospel was.

It is important that we have a good understanding of this section of Scripture because of the things we learn from it and because of how it is abused.

1. **Were these men deacons?** Many refer to the seven as deacons according to 1 Timothy 3. The word "serve" (v. 2) is the word *diakoneo* which is the same word used in 1 Timothy 3:10, 13. The word simply means a minister or servant and does not always suggest the office of a deacon. There is no evidence that the church had elders or deacons at this point. However, the principle of how deacons work under the oversight of the leadership (elders or in this case apostles) is seen in this passage.
2. **How men are appointed.** This is the only passage that tells us how to appoint men to serve. The leadership (apostles) asked the congregation to select the men based upon the qualifications given. The congregation put forth the men they selected, and the leadership appointed them to serve.
3. **The church did its own work.** This was a case of a local church taking care of its own needy. No organization was formed to do the work. Institutionalism teaches that the church can't care for its own without an organization between the church and the work being done. Here the church arranged, oversaw and provided for the needy widows. They didn't set up a widows home (a separate organization between the church and the work being done) and donate to it that it might arrange, oversee and provide for the needy widows.
4. **Is this a case of women in business meetings?** Some argue from this text that women can (and should) be involved in decision making business meetings. The women took no leading role. The apostles (all men) led in the matter (v. 2). The congregation was asked to select seven men (v. 3). The apostles would then appoint them (v. 3). This is no different than when elders ask the congregation to suggest names of men to serve as elders and deacons. The elders are in the lead making decisions, the men and women merely suggest those who might be appointed.<sup>8</sup>

## **Stephen Opposed and Arrested (vv. 8-15)**

*Stephen worked miracles* (v. 8). This is the first record of one other than an apostle working miracles.<sup>9</sup> The miracles caught the attention of some opposing Jews. This begins the record of the first martyr (cf. Acts 7).

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8 See Tom M. Roberts, "Does Acts 6 Authorize Women in Business Meetings?" Guardian of Truth Magazine, XXXIX: 3 p. 16-17, February 2, 1995.

9 The apostles could lay hands on one and give them the power to work miracles (Acts 8:14-17). There is no evidence that that power could be transferred.

*Stephen was opposed* (vv. 9-11). Those of the Synagogue of the Freedmen<sup>10</sup> (from four different places) began disputing with Stephen (v. 9). However, they could not refute what he said (v. 10). They charged him with speaking against Moses and God (v. 11). Stephen answers that charge in chapter 7.

*Stephen arrested and brought before the council* (vv. 12-15). Stephen stood before the same council that Peter and John faced (Acts 4-5). False witnesses were arranged to testify that he spoke against this holy place and the law (vv. 13-14).<sup>11</sup> They misapplied what he had said (v. 14). As the council members looked at Stephen they saw his face “as it had been the face of an angel” (v. 15, ASV).<sup>12</sup> How it was like the face of an angel we are not told.

## Questions

1. Who were the Hellenist (or Grecians)? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What progress reports are given in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What qualifications were given for selecting these seven men? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What do we know about who these seven men were? \_\_\_\_\_

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10 “The Libertines (Latin *libertinus*, a freedman or the son of a freedman) were Jews, once slaves of Rome (perhaps descendants of the Jews taken to Rome as captives by Pompey), now set free and settled in Jerusalem and numerous enough to have a synagogue of their own” (A. T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

11 It may be that Stephen had discussed the destruction of Jerusalem (and temple) and even quoted the Lord on the matter (Matt. 24:1-2). That could be the basis for saying that Stephen was against this holy place (v. 13).

12 “Saul of Tarsus was in that council, and it is a most reasonable conjecture that he reported this phenomenon to Luke” (James Burton Coffman, *Acts*, 131).

5. How does this passage show the concept of Institutionalism to be wrong? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What can we learn from Acts 6:1-7 about how deacons work in relationship to the leadership? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What *first things* are seen in the case with Stephen? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Who opposed Stephen? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What charges were made about the teaching of Stephen? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What was the basis of the charge that he spoke against the holy place? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 7****Lesson 7  
Stephen's Defense and Stoning****Outline****I. Stephen's Defense** (vv. 1-53)

(Denies the charge of speaking against Moses)

**A. A review of the nation of Israel** (vv. 1-50)

1. The call of Abraham and the promise (vv. 1-8)
2. Joseph and the patriarchs in Egypt (vv. 9-16)
3. Moses: God's deliverer (vv. 17-43)
  - a. Delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt (vv. 17-36)
  - b. Promised that God would raise up another like himself (v. 37)
  - c. Was resisted by Israel (vv. 38-43)
4. The tabernacle and the temple (vv. 44-50)

**B. You resist God like your fathers** (vv. 51-53)

1. Stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears (v. 51a)
2. Your fathers persecuted the prophets who foretold of Christ (vv. 51b-52a)
3. You betrayed and murdered Christ (v. 52b)
4. You have not kept the law (v. 53)

**II. Stephen's Stoning** (vv. 54-60)

- A. *The Jews were cut to the heart and gnashed at him* (v. 54)
- B. *Stephen saw Jesus* (vv. 55-56)
- C. *The Jews cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran at him* (v. 57)
- D. *The Jews stoned Stephen* (vv. 58-60a)
- E. *Stephen died* (v. 60b)

**Key Verse That Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 7:51**

*You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*

This chapter is Stephen's answer to the charges being made against him in chapter 6. He is accused of speaking against Moses and God (6:11), and against the holy place and the law (vv. 13-14). When the high priest asked, "Are these things so?" (v. 1), Stephen is afforded the opportunity to set the record straight.

## Stephen's Defense (vv. 1-53)

*A review of the nation of Israel* (vv. 1-50). This section is the bulk of the chapter and Stephen's speech. There are four major thoughts in his review of the history of Israel.

1. **The call of Abraham and the promise** (vv. 1-8). God called Abraham to leave the land of the Chaldeans to go to a land He would show him (vv. 2-4).<sup>1</sup> Even before Abraham had children, God promised to give the land to Abraham's descendants (v. 5). God's promise to Abraham was threefold: a land promise, a nation promise (make a great nation of his family), and a seed promise (to bless all families of the earth through his seed) (Gen. 12:1-3).

God told Abraham that his descendants would be in bondage in a foreign land (Egypt) for 400<sup>2</sup> years, then he would deliver them and bring them to the land He promised them (vv. 6-7; Gen. 15:13-14).

God gave Abraham and his descendants the covenant of circumcision that marked this nation as a distinct and separate people (v. 8; Gen. 17). In these verses (1-8) we see God *building* a nation.

2. **Joseph and the patriarchs in Egypt** (vv. 9-16). Joseph's brothers sold him to some Ishmaelite traders who then sold him to Potiphar in Egypt (v. 9a; Gen. 37:25-28; 39:1). However, God was with Joseph so he rose in power and prominence in Egypt (vv. 9b-10). Thus, when a famine arose in Canaan, Jacob sent his sons to buy grain in Egypt (v. 11). This gave opportunity for Joseph to identify himself to his brothers and send for his father and relatives (75 in number)<sup>3</sup> to come to Egypt (vv. 12-16). In these verses (9-16) we see God *preserving* a nation.

3. **Moses: God's deliverer** (vv. 17-43). In time the children of Israel grew large in number<sup>4</sup> and another Pharaoh came to the throne and oppressed the people of God (vv. 17-19). In the midst of the effort to slow their growth, by killing their babies, Moses was born and spared by Pharaoh's own daughter (vv. 20-22). Moses spent 40 years in Egypt. Moses visited the children of Israel during which time he killed an Egyptian and thus fled to Midian for 40 years (vv. 23-29). God called Moses from a burning bush (Exo. 3) to be the deliverer, to lead his people out of Egypt and through the wilderness for 40 years

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1 "Stephen's assertion that God appeared to Abraham *before* he left Mesopotamia and traveled to Haran sheds additional light on the Genesis account. According to Genesis 11:31 – 12:4, Abraham's father (Terah) took Abraham (then called Abram), Abram's wife Sarai, and Abram's nephew Lot, and left the city of Ur, which was in Mesopotamia...The account in Genesis does not make it clear that God appeared to Abram *before* they traveled to Haran, but Stephen's account does. From Stephen's account we learn that God's appearance to Abram before they traveled to Haran was the reason they left their home in Ur, a fact that accords with Genesis 15:7 and Nehemiah 9:7" (Johnny Stringer, *Acts*, Truth Commentaries, 127).

2 It was actually 430 years (Exo. 12:40-41; Gal. 3:17). The number here is rounded.

3 Genesis 46:27 says the number was 70. Stephen was quoting the Septuagint translation. Had this been a serious blunder Stephen's critics listening to him surely would have used that against him.

4 The number was over 600,000 men when they came out of Egypt (Num. 1:46).

(vv. 30-36).<sup>5</sup> Moses, the deliverer God had chosen, was rejected by his own people. This is parallel to what the Jews did to Jesus. Stephen was leading up to stating that the Jews had rejected God's leader, Christ. In these verses 17-36, God was *delivering* a nation.

This same Moses promised that God would raise up a prophet like him (v. 37; Deut. 18:15-18). This was a prophecy of Christ. Stephen was pointing out that by preaching Christ he was not speaking against Moses, even though that was the charge.

Stephen stated that Moses was the one through whom God gave the law (v.38). Thus, when Israel disobeyed, they were rejecting Moses (v. 39). They turned to idolatry even while Moses was on the mount (vv. 40-41). They went so far into idolatry that God gave them up and allowed Babylon to take them into captivity (vv. 42-43; Amos 5:25-27). His audience couldn't help but see the parallel he was drawing. Those who had called him into question were just like the Israel of old who had rejected Moses. It was them, not Stephen, who rejected Moses.

4. **The tabernacle and the temple** (vv. 44-50). The tabernacle was built as God had instructed Moses. It was used through the wilderness and brought by Joshua into the land of Canaan (vv. 44-45). "It was called a tabernacle of 'witness,' or of 'testimony,' because it was the visible witness or proof of God's presence with them; the evidence that He to whom it was devoted was their protector and guide."<sup>6</sup> Thus, there was no excuse for turning to idolatry.

David asked to build a more permanent place of worship, the temple, which Solomon built (vv. 46-47). Stephen added that God does not dwell in temples made with hands (v.48).<sup>7</sup> As evidence he quoted from Isaiah 66:1-2. Since it was not God's literal dwelling place, it was possible that it could be destroyed as Stephen had quoted from Jesus (Acts 6:14). The temple was just as temporary as the tabernacle.

*You resist God like your fathers* (vv. 51-53). Stephen now turned the charge back on his accusers. They were the ones against God and against Moses. They were like those who rejected Moses. He charged them with being stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart, with ears always resisting the Holy Spirit (v. 51). Just as the prophets who foretold of the Christ were opposed and killed, they had killed the very Christ that was prophesied (vv. 52-53). They had not kept the law they received just like those who opposed Moses (v. 53; cf. v. 39).

### Stephen's Stoning (vv. 54-60)

*The Jews were cut to the heart and gnashed at him* (v. 54). When they heard what Stephen said, they were "enraged" (RSV) and "furious" (NIV) and gnashed their teeth at him.

5 The life of Moses is divided into three periods of 40 years each. He was in Egypt 40 years (v.23). He was in Midian 40 years (v. 30). He was in the wilderness 40 years (v. 36).

6 Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, (Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft).

7 Solomon had made this point when the temple was dedicated (1 Kings 8:27).

*Stephen saw Jesus* (vv. 55-56). Stephen was allowed to see a vision of Christ at the right hand of God.<sup>8</sup> The very one they had crucified was now ruling at the right hand of God.

*The Jews cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran at him* (v. 57). They covered their ears and ran upon him and seized him.

*The Jews stoned Stephen* (vv. 58-60a). They took him out of the city to stone him. They laid their coats at the feet of a young man name Saul.<sup>9</sup> As Stephen was crying out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," they cast stones at him.

*Stephen died* (v. 60b). Stephen prayed that those who stoned him may be forgiven<sup>10</sup>. He then died, becoming the first martyr for the cause of Christ.

## Questions

1. What were the charges made against Stephen which he answered? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was Stephen's point about Abraham (vv. 1-8)? How did it relate to his message of his defense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was Stephen's point about Joseph and the patriarchs in Egypt (vv. 9-16)? How did it relate to his message of his defense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What was Stephen's point about Moses as God's deliverer (vv. 17-43)? How did it relate to his message of his defense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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8 The reference to being full of the Holy Spirit (v. 55) may suggest that it was by the power of the Spirit that he was able to see the vision of Christ.

9 This is our introduction to the man who is later converted (Acts 9; 22; 26) and becomes the great apostle Paul.

10 This was not a request that they be forgiven without repenting and obeying the Lord. Compare the Lord's statement in Luke 23:34.

5. What was Stephen's point about the tabernacle and temple (vv. 44-50)? How does it relate to his message of his defense? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. How did Stephen show that he was not speaking against Moses? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How did Stephen show that he was not speaking against the temple? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What was Stephen's point in verses 51-53? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What is the point being made by stating that God does not dwell in temples made with hands? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What was the reaction to Stephen's speech? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 8****Lesson 8  
Conversion of the Samaritans, Simon, & the Eunuch****Outline****I. The Scattering of the Disciples** (vv. 1-4)

- A. *The cause: a great persecution arose against the church (vv. 1-3)*
- B. *The result: The disciples went everywhere preaching the word (v. 4)*

**II. The Conversion of the Samaritans** (vv. 5-12)

- A. *Philip preached Christ unto them (v. 5)*
- B. *The people were astonished at the miracles (vv. 6-11)*
  - 1. *Philip worked many miracles (vv. 6-8)*
  - 2. *The people had been astonished at the work of Simon the sorcerer (vv. 9-11)*
- C. *They believed and were baptized (v. 12)*

**III. The Conversion of Simon** (vv. 13-25)

- A. *Simon believed and was baptized (v. 13)*
- B. *Simon's fall and restoration (vv. 14-24)*
  - 1. *Peter and John came to Samaria to impart the Spirit (vv. 14-17)*
  - 2. *Simon offered to buy the power of the Spirit (vv. 18-19)*
  - 3. *Peter rebuked Simon (vv. 20-23)*
  - 4. *Simon asked Peter to pray for him (v. 24)*
- C. *Peter and John preached the gospel in Samaria as they returned to Jerusalem (v. 25)*

**IV. The Conversion of the Eunuch** (vv. 26-40)

- A. *The Lord sent Philip to the eunuch (vv. 26-29)*
- B. *Philip preached Jesus unto him (vv. 30-35)*
- C. *The eunuch obeyed (vv. 36-40)*

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 8:4***Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.*

This chapter begins a new thought. Chapters 1-7 deal with the gospel in Jerusalem. Chapters 8-12 deal with the gospel in Judea and Samaria.<sup>1</sup> This is a transition chapter.

### **The Scattering of the Disciples (vv. 1-4)**

*The cause (vv. 1-3).* The previous chapter ended with the stoning of Stephen. Those who killed him laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul (7:58). He was just as guilty as they were, for he consented to Stephen's death (8:1). The persecution increased against the church in Jerusalem to the point that the Christians were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Meanwhile, Stephen was buried with great sorrow and mourning (v. 2). Saul was making havoc<sup>2</sup> of the church by dragging men and women to prison (v. 3).<sup>3</sup>

*The result (v. 4).* The scattering resulted with the disciples going everywhere to preach the word. What was intended to crush Christianity merely fanned the flames and spread it further.

### **The Conversion of the Samaritans (vv. 5-12)**

Philip<sup>4</sup> went to Samaria and preached Christ to them (v. 5). Great numbers were receptive to his preaching, as they not only heard, but saw the miracles he performed (v. 6). The kind of things they witnessed included casting out unclean spirits, healing the paralyzed and lame (v. 7). The miracles and teaching were embraced by the Samaritans with great joy (v. 8).<sup>5</sup> They saw a great contrast in what Philip did and the sorcery<sup>6</sup> that a man named Simon had been practicing before them (vv. 9-11).

The people of Samaria believed the things Philip preached concerning the kingdom and the name of Christ and were baptized (v. 12)<sup>7</sup>. Here we have another progress report with the first case of conversion outside of Jerusalem.

- 1 Refer back to the outline of the book found in the introduction.
- 2 "This word is commonly applied to wild beasts, to lions, wolves, etc., and denotes the 'devastations' which they commit. Saul raged against the church like a wild beast—a strong expression, denoting the zeal and fury with which he engaged in persecution." (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).
- 3 This verse shows that the church is the people. What Saul did to men and women is what he did to the church.
- 4 Philip was one of the seven in Acts 6. He was not an apostle, but was an evangelist and successful family man (Acts 21:8-9).
- 5 This reaction is most interesting in that the Jews and Samaritans didn't get along (John 4:9). "The name 'Samaritans' in 2 Kings 17:29 clearly applies to the Israelitish inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom. In subsequent history it denotes a people of mixed origin, composed of the peoples brought by the conqueror from Babylon and elsewhere to take the places of the expatriated Israelites and those who were left in the land (722 BC)" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by BibleSoft).
- 6 Sorcery is "to practice magic" (Strong's, compare NASV). Simon claimed that what he did was by the power of God (vv. 9-10).
- 7 Here we learn what it means to preach Christ (v.5). Many today think that if we preach about the church or authority, etc. that we are not preaching Christ. Here Philip preached Christ (v.5). That included preaching about the kingdom (the church, Matt. 16:18-19) and the name (authority, Acts 4:12) of Christ (v. 12). It also had to include some preaching about baptism or else why were they baptized?



## The Conversion of Simon (vv. 13-25)

Simon obeyed the gospel as others in Samaria did. He believed and was baptized (v. 13). Here is another progress report concerning the effect of the gospel. Simon was amazed at the miracles Philip worked. Since he had deceived the people with his sorcery for so long, he understood the difference in what he could do and what Philip could do.

Simon soon sinned and endangered his soul by his reaction to the miracles by the apostles. The apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria (v. 14). When they came, they imparted the power of the Holy Spirit on other disciples by the laying on of their hands (vv. 14-17).<sup>8</sup> Simon saw the power the apostles had and offered money so he could have that same power (vv. 18-19).

Peter rebuked Simon for his sin (vv. 20-23). There were two problems with what he had done: (1) The Holy Spirit could not be bought with money (v. 20). (2) The ability to lay hands on another so he could have the power of the Spirit was only for the apostles (v.21). This ability was not assigned to him. His whole attitude about how to get the Spirit and use the power was all wrong (v. 21).

Simon's sin resulted in his being in a lost condition<sup>9</sup>. He stood to perish (v. 20). He was guilty of wickedness (v. 22). His heart was not right and his thoughts were wrong (vv. 21, 22). He was poisoned by bitterness<sup>10</sup> and bound by iniquity (v. 23).<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, Peter told him to repent and pray that he might be forgiven (v. 22). Simon asked Peter to pray for him (v. 24).

After some preaching, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching in villages they passed along the way (v. 25).

## The Conversion of the Eunuch (vv. 26-40)

The Lord sent Philip to the road between Jerusalem and Gaza, which is a 50 mile plus stretch of uninhabited land (v. 26). He came in contact with a man of Ethiopia who was either a Jew living in Ethiopia or a proselyte. He was the treasurer for Candace<sup>12</sup>, the queen of Ethiopia (v. 27). He was a man of great authority, having such a "cabinet" position. He was a eunuch

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8 Though Philip had the power to work miracles he could not bestow that on others. It was necessary that the apostles (Peter and John) come from Jerusalem for others to receive the power like Philip had (vv. 14-17). Though the ones upon whom the apostles laid their hands could work miracles, there is no evidence that they (the ones upon whom they laid their hands) could transfer that to others.

9 This shows that it is possible for a child of God to so sin as to lose his soul. Thus, the doctrine of once saved always saved is false.

10 Sin is a bitter and distasteful thing.

11 This is a reference to the bondage of sin. "Peter describes Simon's offer as poison and a chain" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

12 "Not a personal name, but like Pharaoh and Ptolemy, the title of the queens of Ethiopia" (A. T. Robertson, *ibid.*).

(v. 27). “Eunuchs were not allowed to be Jews in the full sense (Deut. 23:1), but only proselytes of the gate. But Christianity is spreading to Samaritans and to eunuchs.”<sup>13</sup> He was religious, for he had been to Jerusalem to worship (v. 27). His reverence and sincerity for God was demonstrated by his traveling an excess of 1000 miles. He must have been sincere, thinking his relationship to God to be right.

As the eunuch was riding in his chariot, he was reading from Isaiah the prophet (v. 28). The Spirit instructed Philip to approach the chariot (v. 29).

Once Philip came in contact with the eunuch he preached Christ to the eunuch (vv. 30-35). The eunuch was asked if he understood what he read (v. 30). He responded, “How can I, unless someone guides me? (v. 31).<sup>14</sup> He asked Philip to join him in the chariot (v. 31). He was reading Isaiah 53:7-8 (vv. 32-33). The eunuch asked if this was talking about the prophet himself or someone else (v. 34). Philip began at the same passage and preached Christ to him (v. 35). In a case of divine interpretation, Philip said that Isaiah 53 is about Christ. The prophet foretold of the rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord. The message Philip preached was about Christ being the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The message had to include that Jesus is the Son of God and the necessity of being baptized for the remission of sins, or else why would the eunuch want to be baptized (cf. v. 37)?

The eunuch obeyed the gospel (vv. 36-40). When they came to some water, the eunuch asked what hindered him from being baptized (v. 36). There was something in the message he heard that suggested an urgency for obedience. Philip said if he believed he could be baptized (v. 37). The great commission had instructed baptism for believers (Mark 16:16). He confessed that he believed Jesus to be the Son of God (v. 37).<sup>15</sup> Philip then baptized him (v. 38).<sup>16</sup> Here again is a progress report.

After his obedience the eunuch went on his way rejoicing (v. 39), while Philip traveled on preaching the word until he came to Caesarea (v. 40).

It is important to notice *how* God operated upon the sinner in this case of conversion. It was not by an angel, for the angel appeared to Philip, not to the eunuch (vv. 26, 29). There was no direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Rather, the Lord operated through the word that was preached (v. 35).

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13 A. T. Robertson, *ibid*.

14 The eunuch was humble. He admits his lack of understanding and asked for help.

15 Verse 37 is questioned by some as to whether it should appear in the text. Several modern translations either leave it out or relegate it to a footnote. Those that leave it out are based on the Minority text (a Greek text that relies on two of the oldest manuscripts). The KJV and NKJV leave it in being based on the Majority text (a Greek text that relies upon the majority of the over 5,000 extant manuscripts). This reading appears in Iraenus (died 203) and Cyprian (died 258). Their reading is at least 100 years older than the two manuscripts on which the Minority text is based (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus). Whether it is included or not doesn't change any point of doctrine. The confession of faith is required in Romans 10:9-10.

16 The action of going down into the water and coming out shows baptism is immersion.

## Questions

1. What does it mean to "make havoc" of the church? Can you list some ways that people today make havoc of the church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the result of the persecution that increased after Stephen's death? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who were the Samaritans? What makes their conversion so interesting? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is included in preaching Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How would you summarize the progress reports in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What were the two problems with Simon offering to buy the Holy Spirit's power? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What evidence can be given to show that Simon was in a lost condition after he was baptized and tried to buy the power of the Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What was Simon told to do to be forgiven? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How would you answer the contention that confession of one's faith is not essential to salvation since Acts 8:37 is missing from some of the manuscripts and thus many translations? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. "What hinders me...?" is a good question. Can you list some things that hinder people from obeying the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 9****Lesson 9  
Conversion of Saul****Outline****I. The Lord Appeared to Saul on the Road to Damascus (v. 1-9)**

- A. *Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians (vv. 1-2)*
- B. *The Lord appeared to Saul (vv. 3-6)*
  - 1. *A light shined around him (v. 3)*
  - 2. *A voice from heaven said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (v. 4)*
  - 3. *The Lord identified himself (v. 5)*
  - 4. *Saul was told to go into the city to hear what he must do (v. 6)*
- C. *Saul went to Damascus (vv. 7-9)*

**II. Saul Converted (vv. 10-22)**

- A. *The Lord sent Ananias to Saul (vv.10-18a)*
- B. *Saul was baptized and associated with disciples (vv. 18b-19)*
- C. *Saul preached Christ (vv. 20-22)*

**III. Saul Went to Jerusalem (vv. 23-30)**

- A. *He escaped the plot to kill him (vv. 23-25)*
- B. *He joined himself to the disciples in Jerusalem (vv. 26-28)*
- C. *His bold preaching created opposition and he departed to Tarsus (vv. 29-30)*

**IV. The Churches in Judea, Galilee and Samaria Did Well (v. 31)**

- A. *Had peace*
- B. *Were edified*
- C. *Walked in fear and comfort*
- D. *Were multiplied*

**V. Two Miracles by Peter (vv. 32-43)**

- A. *The healing of Aeneas (vv. 32-35)*
- B. *The raising of Dorcas (vv. 36-43)*

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 9:18**

*Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales,  
and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.*

This chapter is about the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. We were first introduced to him in Acts 7:58 where he held the garments of those who stoned Stephen. Next we saw him making havoc of the church (Acts 8:1-3).

## **The Lord Appeared to Saul on the Road to Damascus (vv. 1-9)**

*Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians (vv. 1-2).* Saul was breathing threats and murder against the church (v. 1).<sup>1</sup> The Living Bible translates this, “threatening with every breath and eager to destroy every Christian...” He asked the high priest for letters to the synagogues<sup>2</sup> in Damascus authorizing him to capture any who were of the Way<sup>3</sup> and bring them to Jerusalem. To travel this distance of 130 to 140 miles (one way) and back tells us of his passion and determination.<sup>4</sup>

*The Lord appeared to Saul (vv. 3-6).* When Saul later stood before Agrippa, he called this a “heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19). As Saul came near Damascus a light suddenly was shining around him (v. 3; 22:6). It was brighter than the noon sun (26:13). As Paul fell to the ground he heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (v. 4).<sup>5</sup> When Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?” the answer was, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads” (v. 5).<sup>6</sup> Saul asked what the Lord would have him to do. The Lord told him to go into the city and it would be told him what he should do (v. 6).

As he retells the story before Agrippa, he says the Lord told him that he had appeared to him for the purpose to send him to the Gentiles (Acts 26:16-18).<sup>7</sup>

*Saul went to Damascus (vv. 7-9).* When Saul got up, after having fallen back to the ground, he opened his eyes and couldn’t see for he was blind. He was led by the hand into the city and didn’t see, eat or drink for three days.

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1 “Not ‘breathing out,’ but ‘breathing in’ (inhaling) .... means that threatening and slaughter had come to be the very breath that Saul breathed, like a warhorse who sniffed the smell of battle. He breathed on the remaining disciples the murder that he had already breathed in from the death of the others. He exhaled what he inhaled.... The taste of blood in the death of Stephen was pleasing to young Saul (Acts 8:1) and now he revelled in the slaughter of the saints both men and women” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

2 This suggests that there was a large Jewish population in Damascus.

3 The Way refers to Christianity, the way of Christ (cf. Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

4 This was likely on foot since they had to lead him by the hand after he was blind (v. 8; 22:11).

5 From this we learn that what is done to God’s people is done to Christ.

6 “The expression ‘to kick against the prick’ is derived from the action of a stubborn and unyielding ox kicking against the goad. And as the ox would injure no one by it but himself; as he would gain nothing, it comes to denote ‘an obstinate and refractory disposition and course of conduct, resisting the authority of him who has a right to command, and opposing the leadings of Providence, to the injury of him who makes the resistance.’ It denotes ‘rebellion against lawful authority, and thus getting into greater difficulty by attempting to oppose the commands to duty.’ This is the condition of every sinner” (Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

7 The appearance of the Lord qualified Saul to become an apostle. To be an apostle one had to see the Lord (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1).

## Saul Converted (vv. 10-22)

*The Lord sent Ananias to Saul* (vv. 10-18a). The Lord appeared in a vision to a disciple named Ananias and told him to go to Saul whom he would find praying (v. 11). He was told that Saul had also seen a vision of one coming to lay hands on him to restore his sight (v. 12). Ananias was reluctant due to the reports of Saul's persecution (vv. 13-14). The Lord explained that he had chosen him to bear his name before the Gentiles, kings, as well as the Jews (v. 15). Saul would be shown that he would suffer for the cause of Christ (v. 16). Ananias went to him and laid his hands on him, restoring his sight (vv. 17-18a).

*Saul was baptized and associated with the disciples* (vv. 18b-19). There is more to the story than is recorded in this chapter. Ananias preached the gospel to him, else how would he have known anything about being baptized (v. 18)? The message included, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Saul was not converted (saved) on the road to Damascus as many of our religious friends claim. If he was saved on the road, he was the most miserable new convert (v. 9). If he was saved on the road, Ananias didn't know it (Acts 22:16). If he was saved on the road, he was saved without calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16). If he was saved on the road, he was still in his sins (Acts 22:16).

Ananias told Saul what he must do (v. 6; 22:10). He did not tell him to pray the sinner's prayer as many preachers today would teach.<sup>8</sup> When he found him praying (v. 11), he told him to no longer wait, but arise and be baptized, and then he would be calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16). As long as he continued to pray, he was delaying calling on the name of the Lord. The instruction had to include faith (John 8:24) and repentance (Acts 17:30-31) as well as baptism (v. 18). Here again we have a progress report. The gospel had now reached one of the worst enemies of the cross (1 Tim. 1:15).

*Saul preached Christ* (vv. 20-22). Immediately following his conversion, he went into the very synagogues that were authorized to help him arrest Christians (v. 2) and preached that Jesus is the Son of God (v. 20). Those who listened were amazed knowing that this was the same man who came there on the mission to bind disciples and take them to Jerusalem (v. 21). He confounded<sup>9</sup> the Jews with his teaching that Jesus is the Christ<sup>10</sup> (v. 22; cf. 26:22-23).

## Saul Went to Jerusalem (vv. 23-30)

*He escaped the plot to kill him* (vv. 23-25). Saul now faces the very kind of persecution he had dished out so long. After some time had passed (possibly three years, Gal. 1:17-18), there was a plot to kill him. When it became known, the brethren helped him escape through a window and down the wall in a large basket (cf. 2 Cor. 11:32-33).

8 The sinner's prayer usually goes something like this, "I am a sinner. I repent of my sins. Please forgive me and save me by your blood and come into my heart. I want to receive you as my personal Lord and savior. Amen."

9 "His proofs that Jesus is the Christ were so strong that his own people in Damascus could not argue with him" (NCV).

10 The Anointed One who was foretold in the Old Testament.

*He joined himself to the disciples* (vv. 26-28). When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to “join” himself to the disciples. That is, he wanted to identify with or place membership with the church at Jerusalem (v. 26). They wouldn’t accept him since they were not sure whether he had been converted (v. 26b).<sup>11</sup> However, Barnabas (one in whom the brethren in Jerusalem had confidence) vouched for him (v. 27).<sup>12</sup> So, he was accepted and was active in the church at Jerusalem (v. 28).

*His bold preaching created opposition and he departed to Tarsus* (vv. 29-30). Again, Saul’s bold preaching stirred up the Jews to the point they wanted to kill him. The brethren brought him to Caesarea and then on to Tarsus (his hometown).

## **The Churches in Judea, Galilee and Samaria Did Well (v. 31)**

There was a period of relief from the persecution that had been leveled against the church. Churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace. They were built up in the faith and walked in the fear of God. They had the comfort (encouragement) that came from the Holy Spirit. They were multiplied (more were added by conversion). Here we have another progress report.

## **Two Miracles by Peter (vv. 32-43)**

The rest of the chapter is devoted to two miracles of Peter.

*The healing of Aeneas* (vv. 32-35). Peter went to Lydda (about 25 miles NW of Jerusalem). There he found a man named Aeneas who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. He healed him, giving credit to Jesus the Christ (v. 34). The healing was immediate. The reaction to the miracle was that those who dwelt in Lydda and Sharon<sup>13</sup> turned to the Lord. Here again, we have a progress report.

*The raising of Dorcas* (vv. 36-43). At Joppa, a Mediterranean seaport 10-12 miles NW of Lydda, there was a disciple named Tabitha (Aramaic) which is translated Dorcas (Greek). Dorcas was full of good works and went about helping others (v. 36). She became sick and died (v. 37). Since Joppa was so close to Lydda, the disciples sent for Peter (v. 38). When he came, he found widows who had gathered with the garments that Dorcas had made for them (v. 39).

Peter put them all out of the room, knelt down and prayed. He then turned to the dead body, which had been dead long enough for men to make a journey to Lydda and back, then said, “Tabitha, arise.” She opened her eyes and sat up (v. 40)<sup>14</sup>. Peter took her and presented her alive to the brethren (v. 41). When this became known in the region, many

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11 Churches today should follow this principle. They cannot accept just anyone who claims to be a faithful Christian without asking some questions.

12 Churches have every right (and responsibility) to ask questions not only of the one desiring to place membership, but of any who may know something about them.

13 Sharon “was situated south of Mount Carmel, along the coast of the Mediterranean, extending to Caesarea and Joppa. Lydda was situated in this region” (Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

14 This miracle is totally unlike any claim of miracles today. No person who makes claims of miracles today can work such a miracle.



turned to the Lord (v. 42). Here again, we have a progress report. Peter then stayed awhile in Joppa with Simon who was a tanner (v. 43).

## Questions

1. What does it mean to breathe out threats and murder (v. 1)? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why did the Lord appear to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How can you show that Saul was not saved on the road to Damascus? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why was Ananias sent to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What did Saul have to do to be saved? How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What progress reports are given in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What did Paul do after he was converted? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What does Acts 9:26-28 teach us about placing membership? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What does Acts 9:26-28 teach about the practice of accepting people within a local church? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. How do the miracles recorded in this chapter differ from the claim of modern day miracles? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 10****Lesson 10  
Conversion of Cornelius****Outline****I. The Man Cornelius** (vv. 1-2, 22)

- A. *A Centurion of the Italian Regiment* (v. 1)
- B. *His qualities* (vv. 2, 22)
  1. Devout (v. 2)
  2. Feared God (v. 2)
  3. Gave alms (v. 2)
  4. Prayed always (v. 2)
  5. Just (v. 22)
  6. Good reputation (v. 22)

**II. God Brings Cornelius and Peter Together** (vv. 3-33)

- A. *Cornelius' vision to call for Peter* (vv. 3-8)
  1. The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter who would tell him what he must do (vv. 3-6)
  2. He sent three men for Peter (vv. 7-8)
- B. *Peter's vision to go to Cornelius* (vv. 9-23)
  1. The vision (vv. 9-16)
    - a. Great sheet let down from heaven with all kinds of wild animals (vv. 11-12)
    - b. Peter instructed to eat (vv. 13-15)
      - 1.) Peter refused saying it is unclean (v. 14)
      - 2.) Voice said, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (v. 15)
    - c. Done three times (v. 16)
  2. The three men requested that Peter come to Cornelius (vv. 17-23)
- C. *Peter came to Cornelius* (vv. 24-33)
  1. Cornelius welcomed Peter (vv. 24-27)
    - a. Waited with his family and friends (vv. 24, 27)
    - b. Attempted to worship Peter (vv. 25-26)
  2. Peter explained why he came to Gentiles (vv. 28-29)
  3. Cornelius explained his calling for Peter (vv. 30-33)
    - a. His vision (vv. 30-32)
    - b. Now ready to hear all things commanded of God (v. 33)

**III. Peter's Sermon** (vv. 34-48)

- A. *God does not show partiality* (vv. 34-35)
- B. *The word of peace about Jesus is for all* (vv. 36-43)
  1. God anointed Jesus with power – he worked miracles (v. 38)
  2. Was killed (v. 39)
  3. Raised from the dead (vv. 40-41)

4. Judge of the living and the dead (v. 42)
  5. Fulfillment of prophecy (v. 43)
  6. Those who believe on him receive the remission of sins (v. 43)
- C. *The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his house* (vv. 44-48)
1. As Peter spoke those who heard were filled with the Spirit (v. 44-46)
  2. Peter concluded that they could be baptized (vv. 47-48)

## Key Verses that Summarize the Chapter

### Acts 10:34-35

*34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said:  
"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.  
35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness  
is accepted by Him."*

This chapter is of particular interest because it is about the first Gentile convert. To this point the gospel has only been preached to the Jews. Here a Gentile is saved without being circumcised. Three chapters tell of the conversion of Cornelius. Acts 10 is the account. Acts 11 records Peter's retelling the story. Acts 15 tells of Peter's use of the story in the Jerusalem discussion.

At the center of this chapter is the principle that God shows no partiality (vv. 34-35). Prior to those verses we see how that conclusion was reached (vv. 1-33). Then we have the conclusion (vv. 34-35). Next, we see two actions because of that conclusion (vv. 36-48): Peter preaches to the Gentiles (vv. 36-43), and Cornelius obeys the gospel (v. 48).

### The Man Cornelius (vv. 1-2, 22)

*A centurion of the Italian Regiment* (v. 1). Cornelius was a military man, a centurion who had command over 100 soldiers. A regiment (band, KJV) was a division of the Roman army consisting of 500 to 1000 soldiers. The Italian Regiment was "Probably a band or regiment that was composed of soldiers from Italy, in distinction from those which were composed of soldiers born in provinces. It is evident that many of the soldiers in the Roman army would be those who were born in other parts of the world; and it is altogether probable that those who were born in Rome or Italy would claim pre-eminence over those enlisted in other places."<sup>1</sup>

Despite his power and authority, Cornelius had the same need (for salvation) that the lowest private had.

*His qualities* (vv. 2, 22). Cornelius was a good moral and religious man. He was devout (v. 2). He was sincerely devoted to his religious service. He was active in his convictions. He feared God (vv. 2, 22). He gave alms (charity, benevolence) generously (v. 2). He was good

1 Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft.

to others. He prayed to God continually (v. 2). He was a just man (v. 22). He was honorable or honest. He had a good reputation among all the Jews (v. 22).

In spite of all these great qualities, he was not saved (cf. 11:14). His outstanding morals didn't save him. Just being religious did not save him.

### God Brings Cornelius and Peter Together (vv. 3-33)

There are two miracles that are recorded in this section. Why are these miracles present in this case of conversion and not in others? This is the first Gentile convert. The purpose of these is to bring Cornelius (a prospect for the gospel) and Peter (the preacher) together.

*Cornelius' vision to call for Peter* (vv. 3-8). About the ninth hour of the day<sup>2</sup> he had a vision of an angel speaking to him. The angel told him that his prayers and alms have come up as a memorial before God (v. 4).<sup>3</sup> He was then told to send men to Joppa to bring Peter who would tell him what he must do (vv. 5-6). Cornelius called three men (2 household servants and a soldier) and sent them to Joppa (vv. 7-8).<sup>4</sup>

This vision (miracle) had nothing to do with Cornelius being saved. If it did, why didn't the same happen in all cases of conversion? When the angel departed, there was no evidence that he yet believed in Christ (he had not heard the sermon). The point of this vision was to call for Peter.

*Peter's vision to go to Cornelius* (vv. 9-23). Peter went upon the house top<sup>5</sup> to pray about the sixth hour (v. 9).<sup>6</sup> While there waiting for a meal to be prepared he fell into a trance in which he saw a vision (v. 10). He saw something like a sheet let down out of heaven with all kinds of wild beasts, creeping things and birds (v. 12). He heard a voice say, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat" (v. 13). Peter refused saying that he didn't eat things common or unclean (v. 14). Then the voice said, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (v. 15). This was done three times (v. 16).

Peter learned from the vision that the Gentiles are acceptable (cf. vv. 28-29). The point being that Peter was to go to the Gentiles.

While Peter pondered on the meaning of the vision, the three men from Cornelius arrived asking for Peter (vv. 17-18). The Spirit told Peter that the three men were looking for him and instructed him to go with them (vv. 19-20). After they told Peter about the vision of Cornelius (their reason for coming) and spent the night, they traveled to Caesarea along with some brethren from Joppa (vv. 21-23).

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2 3:00 p.m.

3 This raises a question about the harmony of this with passages like John 9:31 where we read that God does not hear sinners. "God may 'hear' the prayer of the alien. That we would not argue. We can be sure that God is aware of what the alien is doing and saying. Evidence would be the case of Cornelius and Saul. God may even respond somehow. But, that is not answering the prayer in the sense that he promises to listen to the prayers of the righteous. His ears are not open to those who are not righteous (1 Pet. 3:12)" (Donnie V. Rader, *Teach us to Pray*, Guardian of Truth Foundation, 9).

4 Joppa was about 30 miles from Caesarea (v. 1).

5 A flat roof which was common in Palestine.

6 12:00 noon.

*Peter comes to Cornelius* (vv. 24-33). When Peter arrived he found that Cornelius had gathered his family and close friends (vv. 24, 27). Cornelius, attempting to show respect for the one the angel had told him to seek, fell down and attempted to worship Peter (v. 25). Peter refused, saying he was just a man as Cornelius was (v. 26).<sup>7</sup>

Peter explained why he came (vv. 28-29). It was considered unlawful for a Jew to keep company with a Gentile, yet God had shown him (in the vision) that the Gentiles were no longer considered unclean (v. 28). He asked Cornelius why he had sent for him (v. 29).

Cornelius explained his calling for Peter (30-33). He told Peter about the angel appearing to him four days earlier telling him to send for Peter (vv. 30-32). He told Peter that they were all present before God to hear all that God has commanded (v. 33).<sup>8</sup>

### **Peter's Sermon (vv. 34-48)**

*God does not show partiality* (vv. 34-35). Peter begins his sermon with the conclusion that he draws from the two miracles (the vision of Cornelius and his own): God does not show partiality. Rather, anyone from any nation who fears God and works righteousness<sup>9</sup> is accepted by God (v. 35).

*The word of peace about Jesus is for all* (vv. 36-43). Since God does not show partiality, the gospel message concerning peace that comes through Jesus Christ is for all (v. 36). Jesus is Lord of all. Six points are developed in his sermon about Christ:

1. **God anointed Jesus with power so that he worked miracles (v. 38).** Those miracles were evidence of his claims (cf. John 20:30-31).
2. **Jesus was killed (v. 39).** He was crucified on the cross of Calvary.
3. **He was raised from the dead (vv. 40-41).** God raised him up the third day. He was shown openly following his resurrection. Those who saw him were witnesses to the resurrection. Those who ate and drank with him knew for sure that there had been a bodily resurrection (v. 41).
4. **He is the Judge of the living and dead (v. 42).** This same Jesus has been appointed to be the Judge in the Day of Judgment (cf. John 5:22).
5. **He fulfilled prophecy (v. 43).** Jesus is the fulfillment of all that the prophets foretold. He is the Messiah of whom the prophets foretold.
6. **Those who believe on him receive remission of sins (v. 43).** Peter ends his sermon saying that whoever (Jew or Gentile) believes in Christ will have the remission of sins.

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7 Peter must not have been the Pope as the Catholics claim or he would have accepted the worship.

8 It would do us all well if we approach listening to a sermon or a study of the word with this attitude. We should recognize that we are in the presence of God and desire to hear all things that God has commanded.

9 To work righteousness is to be obedient to God's commands which are righteous (Psa.119:172).

*The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his house* (vv. 44-48). As Peter spoke those who heard were filled with the Spirit (v. 44). They were enabled to speak in tongues (v. 46).<sup>10</sup> Those Jews who were with Peter were amazed to see this happening upon Gentiles (v. 45).

**What measure of the Spirit did Cornelius and his family receive?** It was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Consider the following evidence: (1) This was like what the apostles had received (vv. 45, 47). (2) It reminded Peter of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 11:16). (3) It was called the "same gift" (Acts 11:17). Peter said God gave them the Spirit "just as he did to us" (Acts 15:8).

**What was its purpose?** It proved that the Gentiles are now gospel subjects (Acts 11:18).

**What it does not prove.** (1) It does not prove that Holy Spirit baptism is for believers today. Those who believe in Holy Spirit baptism today cite the case of Cornelius as proof. The purpose for which the Spirit fell on Cornelius has been accomplished. After the case of Cornelius, Paul wrote that there is "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).

(2) It does not prove that one is saved before being baptized. Many of those who contend that one is saved before and without water baptism cite the case as proof. They argue that the fact that Cornelius and his house received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized proves they were saved before being baptized. If the reception of the Holy Spirit proves salvation before baptism, it proves salvation before faith. The Spirit fell as Peter *began* to speak (Acts 11:15). Thus, the Spirit fell *before* they heard the message about Jesus that would produce faith (Rom. 10:17).

After seeing that the Spirit fell on the house of Cornelius, Peter concluded that they could be baptized (vv. 47-48). Thus, he commanded them to be baptized (v. 48). Here again, we have a progress report with the first Gentiles to be obedient.<sup>11</sup>

## Questions

1. What is the central principle of this chapter and what does it mean? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What were the qualities that Cornelius had? \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>10</sup> To speak in tongues was to miraculously speak in a language one has never learned. Look back at lesson 2. Evidence that it was an indelible language and not gibberish is that the Jews knew these Gentiles were glorifying God (v.46).

<sup>11</sup> Cornelius believed (Acts 10:43; 15:7), repented (Acts 11:18), and was baptized (Acts 10:47-48).

3. What was the vision Cornelius had and what was the point of it? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What was the vision Peter had and what was the point of it? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How do you know that the vision Cornelius had was not the means by which he was saved?

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6. Does the fact that God acknowledged the prayers of Cornelius prove that God hears and answer the prayers of the alien sinner? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What attitudes do you see in Cornelius that would help us in our approach to listening to the teaching of the word? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. How would you summarize the sermon Peter preached? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What was the purpose of the Holy Spirit falling upon the house of Cornelius? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. How would you answer the contention that when the Spirit fell on Cornelius (before he was baptized) it proves he was saved without being baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 11****Lesson 11  
Peter's Defense and the Church at Antioch****Outline****I. Peter's Defense about Cornelius** (vv. 1-18)

- A. *Peter questioned by the Jews for going to Gentiles* (vv. 1-3)
- B. *Peter's explanation* (vv. 4-17)
  - 1. I was sent by the Lord (vv. 4-12)
    - a. I learned in a vision not to call what God has cleansed common (vv. 4-10)
    - b. Spirit directed me to go with the messengers of Cornelius (vv. 11-12)
  - 2. Cornelius told us that an angel said to send for me (Peter) to hear words by which he could be saved (vv. 13-14)
  - 3. The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his house (vv. 15-17)
    - a. As I began to speak (v. 15)
    - b. Reminded of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism (v. 16)
    - c. If God gave them the same gift, how could I withstand God? (v. 17)
- C. *The conclusion of the Jews: God has allowed the Gentiles to be saved* (v. 18)

**II. The Church at Antioch** (vv. 19-30)

- A. *The gospel preached at Antioch* (vv. 19-21)
  - 1. Because of the scattering (vv. 19-20)
  - 2. Great number obeyed (v. 21)
- B. *Barnabas was sent to Antioch* (vv. 22-24a)
  - 1. Sent by the church at Jerusalem (v. 22)
  - 2. Encouraged them to continue with the Lord (v. 23)
  - 3. Barnabas was a good man (v. 24a)
- C. *The church at Antioch grew* (v. 24b)
- D. *Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch* (vv. 25-26a)
  - 1. Assembled with the church for a year (v. 25)
  - 2. Taught many (v. 26a)
- E. *First place disciples were called Christians* (v. 26b)
- F. *Church at Antioch sent relief to Judea* (vv. 27-30)

**Key Verses that Summarize the Chapter****Acts 11:18, 26**

*18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."  
26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

This chapter gives us more information about the conversion of the first Gentiles that was seen in the last chapter. Questions about what Peter had done are raised by the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem (vv. 1-3). Thus, Peter defends his actions (vv. 4-17). From the evidence presented, the Jewish brethren conclude that the Gentiles can be saved (v. 18). Then we will see the gospel come to Antioch (vv. 19-30).

## Peter's Defense about Cornelius (vv. 1-18)

*Peter questioned by the Jews for going to the Gentiles* (vv. 1-3). Word about what happened with Cornelius quickly reached the church in Jerusalem. When Peter went to Jerusalem the brethren contended with him (v. 2).<sup>1</sup> They questioned him about associating with Gentiles and eating with them, not to mention going so far as to baptize them and accept them into fellowship (v. 3). This was alarming to these Jewish Christians. They were going through the same struggle Peter did earlier (Acts 10:14, 28-29).

"It seems implied that some of the apostles who were still at Jerusalem were in on the criticism. At least, had they expressed their approval of Peter's action, there would have been less opposition from those circumcised believers making their complaint."<sup>2</sup> They were struggling too because this was new to them and they had not seen the evidence Peter had.

*Peter's explanation* (vv. 4-17). Peter told what happened "in order from the beginning" (v. 4).<sup>3</sup> Peter then related the three miracles that surrounded the story of Cornelius.

1. **Peter said he was sent by the Lord in a vision** (vv. 5-12). As Peter was in Joppa he was praying, went into a trance and saw a vision of a great sheet let down from heaven with all manner of beasts (vv. 5-6). Peter heard a voice say, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat" (v. 7). Peter responded by saying he wouldn't since he had never eaten anything common or unclean (v. 8). God responded saying, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (v. 9). The obvious application was that the Gentiles were no longer considered common or unclean (cf. Acts 10:28-29).

When three men came from Cornelius, the Spirit instructed Peter to go with them (vv. 10-12). He was told to go "doubting nothing" (v. 12).<sup>4</sup> Peter took six brethren and went to Cornelius.

2. **Cornelius told Peter and his companions that an angel said to send for Peter** (13-14). An angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter (v. 13). In the previous chapter he was told that Peter would tell him what he must do (Acts 10:6). Here we learn that Peter would tell him words by which he would be saved (v. 14).

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1 "So Peter is at once put on the defensive as the contention went on. It is plain that Peter was not regarded as any kind of pope or overlord" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

2 Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 407.

3 NASB translates this, "orderly sequence." Acts 10 was not intended to be an orderly record of the events, however this chapter is. The difference the order makes will be seen at verse 15 concerning when the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household.

4 "The verb translated 'without misgivings' is the same verb translated 'took issue' in verse 2. Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, raised no such opposition as the Jewish brethren were raising" (Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 410).

3. **The Holy Spirit fell on the house of Cornelius** (vv. 15-17).<sup>5</sup> Peter said the Spirit fell as he *began* to speak (v. 15). When this happened, Peter was reminded of the promise the Lord made of the Holy Spirit baptism (v. 16; Acts 1:5). Peter concluded that if they received the same gift that the apostles had (Acts 2), he could not withstand God (v. 17).<sup>6</sup> To resist the conclusion that the Gentiles could be saved like the Jews would be to oppose the will of God and thus oppose God himself. To refuse to go to the Gentiles would be withstanding God.

*The conclusion of the Jews: God has allowed the Gentiles to be saved* (v. 18). When the Jewish brethren heard Peter's defense, they did two things. (1) They became silent. They ceased taking issue or contending (cf. v. 2). (2) They glorified God saying that God has granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles. They embraced what Peter had done and spoke in favor of it, having concluded that the Gentiles are now gospel subjects.

### **The Church at Antioch (vv. 19-30)**

*The gospel preached at Antioch* (vv. 19-21). When the disciples were scattered because of persecution (that arose over the situation with Stephen), some of them went to Phoenicia, Cyprus and to Antioch preaching the gospel to Jews only. But some from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch and preached to the Hellenist, that is Gentiles (v. 20).<sup>7</sup> When they heard the preaching, a great number believed and turned to the Lord (v. 21). Here is another progress report.

*Barnabas was sent to Antioch* (vv. 22-24a). When the brethren at Jerusalem heard about what happened at Antioch, they sent Barnabas to the church at Antioch (v. 22). When he arrived he saw the effects of the grace of God (v. 23). He saw that they had received the grace of God. Barnabas encouraged them to continue with the Lord (to be loyal to the Lord or "cleave" to the Lord, KJV). What was needed to accomplish that was "purpose of heart" (a resolute heart, a determination to remain faithful).

*The church at Antioch grew* (v. 24b). Due to the work that Barnabas did many turned to the Lord. The church at Antioch was growing (another progress report).

*Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch* (vv. 25-26a). Barnabas went to Tarsus, found Saul and brought him to Antioch. The two of them assembled with the church for a year and taught many people.

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5 See lesson 10 for more explanation of what measure of the Spirit Cornelius received.

6 The ESV and NASB translate this "stand in God's way."

7 "The express object of the narrative has been to describe the admission of Gentiles into the church. There would have been nothing remarkable in these men preaching to Hellenists who had long before been received into the church, and formed a large part of the church at Jerusalem. It is better to follow the rendering of the King James Version and English Revised Version (1885), though the other reading has the stronger MS. evidence. Note, also, the contrast with the statement in Acts 11:19, 'to the Jews only.' There is no contrast between Jews and Hellenists, since Hellenists are included in the general term 'Jews' (M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

*First place disciples were called Christians* (v. 26b). It is here where the term Christian was first used.<sup>8</sup> Some think the term was given in derision by the enemies of the cross. The term “called” means it was by divine calling. The same term is used in Matthew 2:12, 22 of a divine warning.<sup>9</sup>

This context shows that those in the church and those who are Christians are one and the same. Consider that those who believed and turned to the Lord (v. 21) were the ones who made up the church (v. 26). Those same people were called disciples (v. 26). They were also called Christians (v. 26).

*Church at Antioch sent relief to Judea* (vv. 27-30). Prophets<sup>10</sup> came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, foretold of a great famine throughout the world (v. 28).<sup>11</sup> The famine happened during the time of Claudius Caesar.<sup>12</sup>

The brethren in Antioch determined to send relief to their brethren in Judea. Each gave according to his ability (v. 29).<sup>13</sup> When the money was pooled together, they sent it<sup>14</sup> to the elders<sup>15</sup> using Barnabas and Saul as messengers (v. 30).

## Questions

1. Who questioned Peter about his actions with Cornelius? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What was the contention that those in Jerusalem had with Peter? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is the significance or importance of giving the story by order (v. 4)? \_\_\_\_\_

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8 The term Christian is only used three times in the NT. The other two are Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16.

9 The same word is also used in Romans 7:3 where the woman would be “called” an adulteress. God calls her that.

10 These are New Testament prophets who were inspired by the Spirit (cf. v. 28).

11 The world likely refers to the Roman empire.

12 Claudius Caesar reigned from 41 AD to 54 AD.

13 They gave as they were prospered (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

14 The reference to sending “it” suggests collective action.

15 This is the first reference to elders in the church.

4. What three points did Peter make in his explanation? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What was Peter's conclusion (v. 17)? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What was the conclusion drawn by those who heard Peter (v. 18)? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What does it mean to withstand God? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. How did the church at Antioch get started? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What are some first things found in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What do we learn from seeing that those who are Christians and those in the church are the same? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 12****Lesson 12  
Herod Persecutes the Church****Outline****I. James is Killed** (vv. 1-3a)

- A. *With a sword* (vv. 1-2)
- B. *This pleased the Jews* (v. 3a)

**II. Peter is Imprisoned – But is Delivered** (vv. 3b-19)

- A. *Imprisoned* (vv. 3b-4)
  1. Seized (v. 3b)
  2. Guarded by four squads of soldiers (v. 4)
  3. Being held to be brought before the people (v. 4)
- B. *Delivered* (vv. 5-19)
  1. Prayer was being offered (vv. 5, 12)
  2. An angel of the Lord brought out Peter (vv. 6-11)
  3. Peter went to Mary's house (vv. 12-17)
  4. Created a stir with Herod and his soldiers (vv. 18-19)

**III. The Death of Herod** (vv. 20-24)

- A. *Herod received praise and glory as a god* (vv. 20-22)
- B. *Struck dead by an angel and eaten with worms* (v. 23)
- C. *Word of God grew – people obeyed* (v. 24)

**IV. The Return of Barnabas and Saul with John Mark** (v. 25)**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 12:1**

*Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.*

In this chapter the pressure is turned up on persecution.<sup>1</sup> Around the time of the famine (cf. 11:27-30) Herod persecutes the church. The events of this chapter occur around 44 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 This is a second wave of persecution. It has been at least eight years since Stephen was stoned.
- 2 Dated from the death of Herod (vv. 20-23).

## James is Killed (vv. 1-3a)

*With a sword* (vv. 1- 2). Herod<sup>3</sup> “laid violent hands”<sup>4</sup> on some in the church. “Perhaps the persecution of the church by Herod Agrippa I was part of his attempt to win the favor of his new subjects in Judea...We can imagine how it seemed politic to Agrippa to gain the favor of both Sadducees and Pharisees by making himself the instrument of their opposition to what the Christians were doing and believing.”<sup>5</sup>

He killed James with a sword and he was most likely beheaded. This James is the brother of John and son of Zebedee. He was the first of the apostles to be martyred.<sup>6</sup>

*This pleased the Jews* (v. 3a). Here Luke tells us that Herod’s motives were political. He really didn’t have a problem with James or his teaching. Nor was he seeking justice for some great wrong. He was merely trying to gain the favor of the Jews.

## Peter Imprisoned – But is Delivered (vv. 3b-19)

*Imprisoned* (vv. 3-4). Since killing James pleased the Jews, Herod thought he would go further and arrest Peter (v. 3b). This was in the days of Unleavened Bread (v. 3b).<sup>7</sup> The timing of Peter’s arrest fit Herod’s political goal. A greater number of Jews would be present in Jerusalem and would see Herod’s hand in helping them with their enemy, thereby boosting his popularity.

Peter was secured in prison by four squads<sup>8</sup> and perhaps this was because he had escaped before (Acts 5:18-19). Herod’s intent was to bring Peter out before the people (no doubt to execute him) after the Passover (v. 4).

*Delivered* (vv. 5-19). While Peter was in prison the brethren were offering constant<sup>9</sup> prayer to God for Peter (v. 5).<sup>10</sup> When the time was drawing close for Herod to bring him out, Peter was sleeping (v. 6). He demonstrated a calmness and confidence that few could have. He had a peace that only comes from real faith.

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3 This is Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great (who was ruling at the time of the birth of Jesus). He ruled in Palestine from 42 A.D. to 44 A. D.. This is the only reference to him in the New Testament.

4 ESV

5 Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 427.

6 “Luke has told us nothing of James’ work; but we may suppose he was doing significant evangelization, for otherwise it is hard to think of a reason for Herod or the Jews to make him a prime target of this persecution” (Reese, *ibid.* 428).

7 The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed the Passover and continued for seven days (Exo. 12:12, 13, 29, 30; Lev. 23:5-8; Deut. 16:7-8). The Passover was on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (Nisan – first part of April). The term Passover (v. 4) seems to be used to include the entire feast.

8 A squad is four soldiers, making a total of sixteen soldiers.

9 Not only continual prayer, but earnest, fervent prayer. The word means to strain or stretch (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*.)

10 It is possible that they were praying for Peter’s release. If they were, why were they so surprised at his release (vv. 12-17)? It seems more likely that they think he faces certain death. Thus, they may have been praying for Peter’s faith and courage as he faced death or even that he might not die.



An angel of the Lord woke Peter and told him to get up quickly (v. 7). The chains, holding him to two soldiers, miraculously fell off. Peter put on his sandals and outer garment, as the angel instructed, and followed the angel out of the prison (vv. 8-10). Like the chains, the gate that secured the prison opened miraculously (v. 10). Peter thought this was a vision, but came to realize that he had been delivered from the hand of Herod and the Jews (v. 11).<sup>11</sup>

Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark<sup>12</sup>, where brethren had gathered for prayer (v. 12).<sup>13</sup> When Peter knocked at the door, a girl named Rhoda answered the door and was so excited to see Peter that she didn't open the gate (vv. 13-14). When she told the others, they thought she was beside herself or that she had seen his angel (v. 15).<sup>14</sup> When they came to realize that this was really Peter, they were all amazed (v. 16). They were so excited that Peter had to motion for them to quieten down so he could speak (v. 17). He told them to go tell James<sup>15</sup> and the other brethren (v. 17). He then left to go elsewhere before it was discovered that he had escaped prison again.

When it was discovered that Peter was gone, it created a stir with Herod and his soldiers (vv. 18-19). Herod commanded that his soldiers, who were supposed to be guarding Peter, be put to death. Herod then left Jerusalem and went to Caesarea (v. 19).

### The Death of Herod (vv. 20-24)

*Herod received praise and glory as a god* (vv. 20-22). Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon (v. 20). For what reason we are not told. Though neither of these were under the rule of Herod, they were dependent upon him for a good part of their food supply. Consequently, they came to him with one accord (v. 20).<sup>16</sup> Working through Blastus, a personal aide to the king, they gained an audience before the king (v. 20). Since we don't know the issue at hand, we don't know what these ambassadors said. From the joyous response to his oration, they may have caved in to his pressure so they could eat.

Josephus (the Jewish historian) documented this day as a feast in honor of Caesar. As Herod was dressed in royal apparel, he sat on his throne and addressed the people of Tyre and Sidon (v. 21). They so rejoiced over what he was saying that they praised him as a god and not a man (v. 22).

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11 "We are left to wonder why God chose to deliver one apostle but not the other. Today in his providential activity, God may – for reasons our finite minds cannot imagine – choose to deliver one Christian from some undesirable fate but not deliver another from such a fate. As we pray for those in trouble, we must realize that God does what we ask only if our requests are in accordance with his will (1 John 5:14); and sometimes deliverance fits into his will, while other times it does not" (Johnny Stringer, *Acts*, Guardian of Truth Foundation, 244).

12 John Mark is the author of the gospel of Mark and a travel companion of Paul (cf. v. 25; 15:37-39; Col. 4:10).

13 This was a "prayer meeting" where they had gathered for the purpose of prayer. "The implication may be that this was but one of several 'cottage prayer meetings' in and around Jerusalem. There may have been other groups all over Jerusalem meeting for prayer, for James and others were not present" (Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 435). See verses 5, 12, 17.

14 This is based upon the false concept that each person has a guardian angel.

15 This James is most likely the Lord's brother.

16 They came together and chose ambassadors to approach the king.

*Herod was struck dead by an angel and eaten by worms* (v. 23). A righteous man would have refused such worship (cf. Acts 10:25-26). Because he did not give glory to God, he was struck by an angel, eaten by worms and died.

*The word of God grew – people obeyed* (v. 24). Here is another progress report. The word of God was being received and people were obeying the gospel. Herod's efforts had just the opposite effect. What he thought would bring an end to Christianity brought his own demise and fanned the flame of the cause of Christ.

### **The Return of Barnabas and Saul with John Mark (v. 25)**

Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem where they delivered the benevolence from Antioch (cf. 11:27-30). They brought John Mark back with them to Antioch. This will serve as home base from which Saul will go out on his missionary journeys.

With this we conclude the first section of the book – The Gospel in Palestine (1-12). Look back at the outline of the book in the introduction. We are now ready to launch into the second section – The Gospel to the Uttermost Parts of the World (13-28).

## **Questions**

1. What do we know about Herod? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What did Herod have to gain by killing James? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. List the political moves you see in this chapter (by Herod or anyone else). \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What do we learn about prayer in this chapter (vv. 5, 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Thought question: How could Peter be so calm and sleep under these circumstances (v. 6)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. How did Peter escape from prison? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. How would you answer the question of why would God spare Peter but not James? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Does the fact that those in Mary's house were surprised mean that they really didn't believe in the power of prayer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. For class discussion: What value is there in having a prayer meeting like they had in verses 5, 12? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What happened to Herod and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Acts 13 & 14****Lesson 13****Beginning the First Missionary Journey,  
Opposition Faced, Completion of the First Journey****Outline  
Chapter 13**

- I. From Antioch to Cyprus** (vv. 1-12)
  - A. *Saul and Barnabas sent forth* (vv. 1-3)
  - B. *Preaching in Cyprus* (vv. 4-12)
  
- II. At Antioch in Pisidia** (vv. 13-52)
  - A. *From Paphos to Antioch* (vv. 13-15)
  - B. *Paul's sermon in Antioch* (vv. 16-41)
    - 1. A brief history of Israel awaiting the Messiah (vv. 16-22)
    - 2. Israel has a savior: Jesus (vv. 23-39)
      - a. John's testimony about Jesus (vv. 23-25)
      - b. Jesus put to death –fulfilled prophecy (vv. 26-29)
      - c. Jesus raised from the dead (vv. 30-37)
      - d. Remission of sins proclaimed (by faith) through Jesus (vv. 38-39)
    - 3. A warning about unbelief (vv. 40-41)
  - C. *Results of the sermon* (vv. 42-52)
    - 1. Interest of the Gentiles aroused (vv. 42-43)
    - 2. Jews become envious (vv. 44-52)
      - a. Refused the word and persecute (vv. 44-49)
      - b. Paul and Barnabas depart to Iconium (vv. 50-52)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 13:2**

*As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said,  
"Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work  
to which I have called them."*

## Outline Chapter 14

### Opposition Faced and Completion of the First Journey

#### I. At Iconium (vv. 1-7)

- A. *Great multitudes (Jews and Gentiles) believed (v. 1)*
- B. *Some unbelieving Jews created a stir (vv. 2-7)*
  - 1. Poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against the brethren (v. 2)
  - 2. Great debate (vv. 3-4)
  - 3. Attempted to abuse and stone the apostles (v. 5)
  - 4. Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra and Derbe (vv. 6-7)

#### II. At Lystra (vv. 8-20a)

- A. *Crippled man healed (vv. 8-10)*
- B. *People attempted to worship Paul and Barnabas (vv. 11-18)*
  - 1. Offered praise and prepared to sacrifice (vv. 11-13)
  - 2. Paul and Barnabas responded (vv. 14-18)
    - a. We are men like you (vv. 14-15a)
    - b. Preach: that you should turn from these things to the living God (vv. 15b-17)
  - 3. Scarcely restrained them (vv. 18)
- C. *Jews (from Antioch and Iconium) persuaded the multitudes and stoned Paul (vv. 19-20a)*

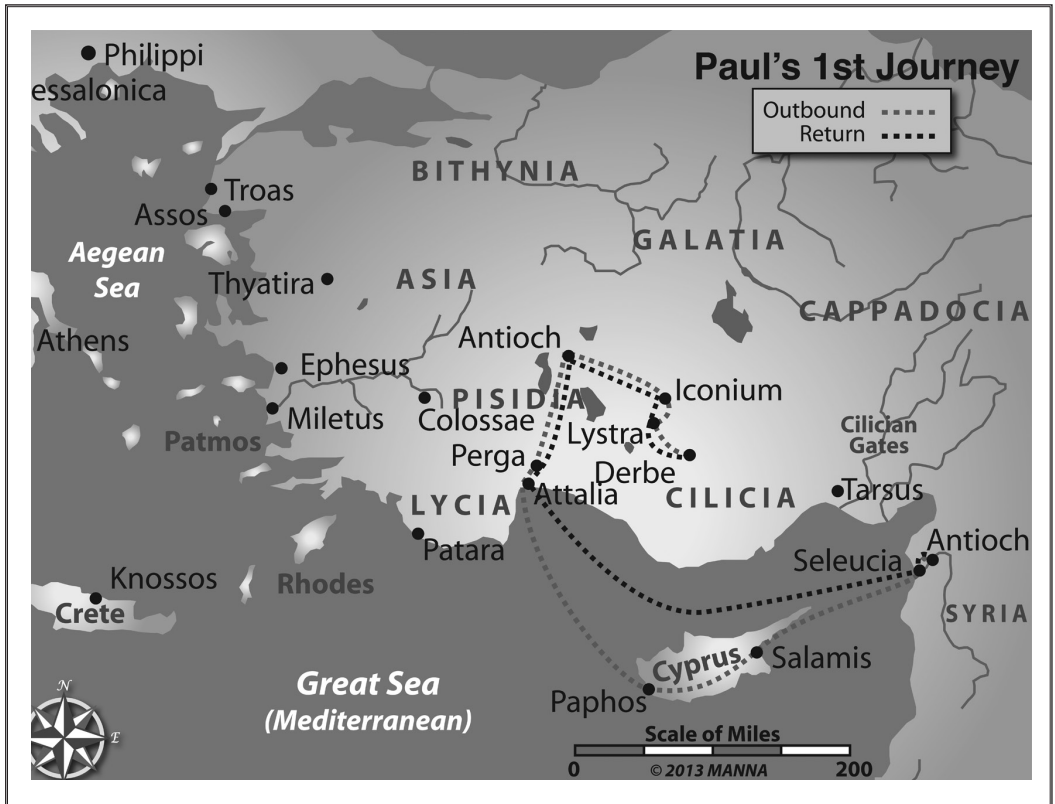
#### III. At Derbe and the Return Trip Home (vv. 20b-28)

- A. *Many believed at Derbe (vv. 20b-21a)*
- B. *Returned home via revisiting churches (vv. 21b-28)*
  - 1. At Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (vv. 21b-23)
    - a. Strengthened and exhorted (vv. 21b-22)
    - b. Appointed elders in every church (v. 23)
  - 2. At Perga – preached (vv. 24-25a)
  - 3. Back at Antioch (vv. 25b-28)
    - a. Reported their work (v. 27)
    - b. Stayed a long time (v. 28).

### Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter

#### Acts 14:22

*Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*



With this lesson we begin the second section of the book – The Gospel to the Uttermost Parts of the World (13-28).<sup>1</sup> The focus will be on Paul and his work among the Gentiles. These two chapters record Paul's first missionary journey. This journey covers 1200 miles and lasts 3-4 years (45 A.D. – 49 A.D.). Antioch becomes home base for Paul and his work. The church at Antioch is the first church among the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas spend a year working with the church. This congregation is a notable example of an evangelistic church that has a real interest in spreading the gospel beyond their region

### From Antioch to Cyprus (13:1-12)

*Saul and Barnabas sent forth* (vv. 1-3). There are five prophets<sup>2</sup> and teachers listed here. Barnabas<sup>3</sup> and Saul have been seen previously in the book. Little is known about the other

1 Refer back to the outline in the introduction.

2 Prophets had come to Antioch with Agabus (Acts 11:27-28). Perhaps these were some of those prophets.

3 Acts 4:36-37; 9:27; 11:22-30; 12:24-25.

three: Simeon was called Niger,<sup>4</sup> Lucius was of Cyrene,<sup>5</sup> and Manaen was identified as having been brought up with Herod the tetrarch.<sup>6</sup>

The Holy Spirit instructed them to send Barnabas and Saul out to do the work of preaching (v. 2). The brethren fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on them (to appoint them to the work<sup>7</sup>) and sent them away (v. 3).

*Preaching in Cyprus*<sup>8</sup> (vv. 4-12). They first came to Salamis on the east side of the island and preached in the synagogues. John Mark was taken along on the trip to help in the work (v. 5; cf. 12:25). Then they crossed over the island to Paphos. There they taught a man, Sergius Paulus, who was a Roman official, the proconsul. However, there was a false teacher there named Bar-Jesus (Aramaic), but also called Elymas (Greek) who was a sorcerer and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith (v. 8). Saul, whose name is changed here to Paul, severely rebuked him calling him a deceiver, a fraud, son of the devil, and an enemy of righteousness (v. 10). Paul said he was perverting the ways of the Lord (v. 10). Elymas was struck blind by the apostle (v. 11). When the proconsul saw this, he believed (v. 12). He was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Here is a progress report.

### At Antioch in Pisidia (13:13-52)

*From Paphos to Antioch* (vv. 13-15). Leaving Paphos they came to Perga (in Pamphylia). There John Mark left and went back to Jerusalem (v. 13).<sup>9</sup> From Perga they came to Antioch of Pisidia, went into the synagogue and listened to the reading of the Law and Prophets. The leaders in the synagogue asked Paul and Barnabas if they wanted to speak (v. 15).

*Paul's sermon in Antioch* (vv. 16-41). Paul's sermon had three major points.

1. **A brief history of Israel awaiting the Messiah** (vv. 16-22). Paul's summary of Old Testament history is very brief. His point: God was working with the nation of Israel through whom the Messiah came.
2. **Israel has a savior: Jesus** (vv. 23-39). From the seed of David God raised up a savior, Jesus (v. 23). John the baptizer prepared the way for the coming of the Jesus (vv. 23-25). However, those in Jerusalem and their rulers didn't understand what John and the prophets foretold, though they had opportunity in the reading of the prophets every

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4 "Niger is a Latin name meaning black, and the title evidently had some allusion to his color. It appears that he was a Black" (Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 454). This was probably given to distinguish him from others named Simeon.

5 From North Africa. Probably the same one mentioned in Romans 16:21.

6 "The word translated here as 'which had been brought up,' *suntrofos* (NT:4939), denotes 'one who is educated or nourished at the same time with another.' It is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. He might have been connected with the royal family, and, being nearly of the same age, was educated by the father of Herod Antipas with him. He was, therefore, a man of rank and education, and his conversion shows that the gospel was not confined entirely in its influence to the poor" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

7 This was done in the appointment of the seven (Acts 6:6).

8 Home of Barnabas (Acts 4:36).

9 We do not know why he left, but Paul didn't think his decision was good (cf. Acts 15:36-41).



Sabbath (v. 27). Consequently, they fulfilled the scriptures in condemning him to death (vv. 28-29). But God raised him from the dead (v.30). The evidence he gave included the eyewitnesses (vv. 31-32), fulfillment of prophecy (vv. 33-37), and the empty tomb (v. 37). Thus, remission of sins is proclaimed (by faith) through Jesus (vv. 38-39). This justification was not possible by the Law of Moses.

3. **A warning about unbelief** (vv. 40-41). The sermon concluded with a warning (from Habakkuk 1:5) that those who reject the message and do not believe would perish.

*Results of the sermon* (vv. 42-52). The interest of the Gentiles was aroused so they begged for more the next Sabbath (vv. 42-43). When they came together the next Sabbath, the Jews became envious (vv. 44-45). They refused the word and opposed it (v. 45). Paul and Barnabas were expelled from the region, so they departed to Iconium (vv. 50-52).

### **At Iconium (14:1-7)**

*Great multitudes (Jews and Gentiles) believed* (v.1). At Iconium they went to the synagogue and a great multitude believed. Here is another progress report.

*Some unbelieving Jews created a stir* (vv. 2-7). Some unbelieving Jews poisoned the minds of some against those who accepted the truth (v. 2). Paul and Barnabas stayed a while preaching and defending the truth, but the city was divided (vv. 3-4). There was an attempt to abuse and stone the apostles (v. 5). When they became aware of it, they went to Lystra and Derbe (vv. 6-7).

### **At Lystra (14:8-20a)**

*Crippled man healed* (vv. 8-10). At Lystra a man crippled from birth was healed. He leaped and walked.

*People attempted to worship Paul and Barnabas* (vv. 11-18). Because of the miracle, the people treated Paul and Barnabas as gods (v. 11). They called Barnabas Zeus<sup>10</sup> and Paul Hermes.<sup>11</sup> The priest of Zeus brought oxen and attempted to sacrifice them in worship to Paul and Barnabas (v. 13). The apostles refused the worship saying they were just men and they preached that men were to turn away from such practices to serve the living God (vv. 14-18).

*Jews (from Antioch and Iconium) persuaded the multitudes and stoned Paul* (vv. 19-20a). Unbelieving Jews came from Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium and persuaded the multitude to turn against Paul. So they stoned Paul, dragged him out of the city, and left him for dead (v. 19). The brethren gathered around him and he rose up and went back into the city (v. 20). The next day he and Barnabas departed for Derbe.

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10 Zeus (Greek name). The KJV uses the name Jupiter (Roman name). "Jupiter was the most powerful of all the gods of the ancients...The Father of gods and men" (Albert Barnes, *ibid.*)

11 Hermes (Greek name). The KJV uses the name Mercury (Roman name). He was the god of eloquence, the messenger of the gods.

## At Derbe and the Return Trip Home (14:20b-28)

*Many believed at Derbe* (vv. 20b-21a). Here is a brief progress report. They preached in Derbe and made many disciples.

*Returned home via revisiting churches* (vv. 21b-28). Leaving Derbe they revisited Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. Two things were accomplished in their visits with these churches.

1. **They strengthened the souls of the disciples** (v. 22).<sup>12</sup> They encouraged them to continue in the faith and not give up, but warned that it would not be easy (v.22). We don't know how much time they spent with each church but they stayed long enough to instruct, encourage, and organize each church.
2. **They appointed elders in every church** (v. 23). God's plan is for each local church to have elders.<sup>13</sup> The importance of a church having elders is seen in how quickly elders were appointed. From the time these churches were established they had elders in less than five years. It did not take decades to have elders.

Next they came to Perga and preached there and then on to Attalia (v. 25). From there they sailed back to Antioch (of Syria), not going back to Cyprus (v. 26). Paul and Barnabas reported to the church at Antioch the information of the work that had been done (v. 27). They had an interest in the work of the gospel in other places.

Paul and Barnabas stayed awhile in Antioch before traveling again (v. 28).

## Questions

1. List the "progress reports" that are found in these chapters. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Approximately how long did this first missionary journey take? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What descriptions are given about Elymas? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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12 This is part of "teaching them to observe all things..." (Matt. 28:20).

13 Every reference to a church having elders is always a plurality of elders.

4. What do we know about John Mark's leaving and going back home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How would you summarize Paul's sermon at Antioch? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Paul makes a point that the Jewish leaders didn't get what the prophets were saying (13:27). Can you think of some practical application(s) from this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What was the reaction to Paul's sermon at Antioch? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What two extremes happened at Lystra that shows how fickle the people were? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How were the brethren strengthened (14:22)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. For class discussion: Discuss how quickly elders were appointed. Why do some churches not have elders after 20, 30 or even 40 years? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. For class discussion: Discuss the interest that the church at Antioch had in the work Paul and Barnabas had done. Why are some churches not that interested in the work in other places? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## The Jerusalem Discussion about Circumcision

### Outline

#### I. The Discussion in Jerusalem (vv. 1-29)

- A. *The problem explained* (vv. 1-5)
- B. *The speeches* (vv. 6-21)
  - 1. Peter spoke (vv. 7-11)
  - 2. Paul and Barnabas spoke (v. 12)
  - 3. James spoke (vv. 13-21)
- C. *A letter was sent from the apostles and elders to the Gentiles in Antioch* (vv. 22-29)

#### II. The Church at Antioch Received the Letter (vv. 30-35)

- A. *Rejoiced over its encouragement* (vv. 30-32)
- B. *The brethren departed* (vv. 33-35)
  - 1. Some returned to the apostles (v. 33)
  - 2. Silas, Paul, and Barnabas stayed in Antioch (vv. 34-35)

#### III. Beginning the Second Journey (vv. 36-41)

- A. *Paul and Barnabas disagreed over John Mark* (vv. 36-38)
- B. *Paul and Barnabas separated* (vv. 39-41)
  - 1. Barnabas and John Mark sailed to Cyprus (v. 39)
  - 2. Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia (vv. 40-41)

### Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter

#### Acts 15:2

*Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.*

The previous chapter ends with Paul and Barnabas back at Antioch working with the church. During that time some Judaizing teachers have come from Jerusalem teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised in order to be saved. The meeting(s) here have been called the Jerusalem "conference". This is not a conference wherein the vote of the majority determines the official church doctrine or policy. I prefer to call this the Jerusalem discussion.

## The Discussion in Jerusalem (vv. 1-29)

*The problem explained* (vv. 1-5). The Judaizing teachers came to Antioch teaching that Gentiles must become like Jews (by being circumcised) in order to be saved (v. 1). The fact that they were from Judea gave the impression that "Jerusalem" (the church there, its elders, and the apostles) was in agreement.

Paul and Barnabas "had no small dissension and dispute with them" (v. 2). "Dissension" literally means "a standing" (Strong's). Thus, they stood against or "argued" (LBP) against them. The error had caused discord.<sup>1</sup> "Dispute" literally means "questioning" (ASV).<sup>2</sup> Paul and Barnabas called the doctrine into question. Thus, a "debate" (NIV) ensued.<sup>3</sup>

The controversy was "no small" one. It was a big and serious debate because the doctrine being addressed was a fundamental violation of the gospel. It denied the sufficiency of the gospel.<sup>4</sup>

It was determined that Paul, Barnabas and some other brethren would go to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about the question (v. 2). What was the purpose of going to the apostles and elders? It was not to learn the truth about whether circumcision was essential. Paul and Barnabas already knew the truth as evidence in their speech later in Jerusalem (v. 12). Neither was it to establish policy. They went so that Antioch could see where the Jerusalem church, with its elders and the apostles, stood.<sup>5</sup>

When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem they reported to the church, the apostles, and elders how God had worked through them among the Gentiles (v. 4). However, some Pharisees, who had been converted, rose up contending that it was necessary to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (v. 5).<sup>6</sup>

There were public and private meetings involved in this meeting at Jerusalem. This meeting in verse 4 was a public meeting. "It seems that the assembly adjourned to meet again at another hour."<sup>7</sup> There was another meeting of the apostles and elders (vv. 6-22) along with the "multitude" (v. 12) or the "whole church" (v. 22). There was also a private meeting in which Paul met with those "of reputation." "I did so *in private* to those who were of reputation" (Gal. 2:2, NASV, emphasis mine, DVR). This private meeting must have been either prior to or between the public meetings.<sup>8</sup> In this private meeting the right hand of fellowship was extended to Paul (Gal. 2:9).<sup>9</sup>

1 The same word is translated "insurrection" (Mark 15:7), and "uproar" (Acts 19:40) in the KJV. Thus, the idea is that Paul and Barnabas rose up against the false teachers.

2 The same word is translated "questions" (Acts 25:20; 1 Tim. 1:4; 6:4; Tit. 3:9) in the KJV.

3 Debate is good. We are to contend for the faith (Jude 3). Paul was set for the defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:17).

4 They did not ignore the error. They did not agree to disagree.

5 The fact that the false teachers were from Judea (v. 1) coupled with the statement of the apostles that they gave no such command (v. 24) suggests that these false teachers left the impression that the apostles and the church at Jerusalem were behind them or at least in agreement.

6 Apparently they tried to harmonize the gospel with the Law of Moses and live by both.

7 J. W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*, 183.

8 See J. W. McGarvey, *ibid.*, 183; *New Commentary on Acts*, Vol. II, 60.

9 The meeting(s) in Acts 15 are the same as the meeting(s) in Galatians 2. See Mike Willis, *Truth Commentaries, Galatians*, 46-50.

**Is this an example of women in church business meetings?** Those who think Acts 15 allows women in business meetings tell us that this chapter is an example of women being involved in making decisions for the church. They think they see that in more than one spot in this chapter.

These brethren contend that the whole church at Antioch (including women) determined to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (vv. 2-3). Thus, women were involved in making that determination. We are told that more than just the apostles and elders (v. 6) were present and discussed the matters at hand. The “multitude” (v. 12) or “whole church” (v. 22) was present. Thus, this was a congregational meeting to discuss the problem. The contention says that the “whole church” (including women) was involved in the decision to send a letter to Antioch and in choosing some of their own to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (v. 22). Then, we are told, that the whole church gathered to receive the letter at Antioch (v. 30) and not just the elders or the men of the congregation. Their conclusion from the above points was: women may attend and participate in business meetings.

Some are using Acts 15 to say that women may attend business meetings, but cannot participate. Others are using the same passage to say that a woman may attend and participate. Still, others are saying that this same text teaches that she must be in the business meetings and be involved in the decision-making process.

Some contend that Acts 15 teaches that women can be in the business meetings in the absence of elders. Others say women are to be a part of the decision-making process even when there are elders. In fact, some are saying that elders cannot make any decision without a congregational meeting.

The question about women and Acts 15 is not: (a) whether there was a gathering of the whole church including women, (b) whether the whole church including women listened to the speeches recorded in vv. 7-21, or (c) whether the whole church including women agreed with the proposal of sending a letter to Antioch. To prove that women were involved in the above (which is what the text says) proves nothing about women in business meetings. The question is whether women were involved in any decision-making process.

Keep in mind that only men were present in the private meeting (Gal. 2:1, 2, 9). Those who participated in the discussions were men. (a) It was the apostles (men) and elders (men) who were to consider the matter (vv. 2, 6). (b) Those who addressed the meeting were men: Peter (v. 7), Paul (v.12), Barnabas (v. 12), and James (v. 13). (c) Those who wrote the letter also gave commands (v. 24). The statement “to whom we gave no such commandment” implies that some commandment was given. Who are the “we”? Were women included in giving commandments? If so, could they do so today? (d) There is no evidence that any woman said anything in either of the public meetings in Acts 15! In fact, the multitude kept silent (v. 12). While it is true that the church (including women) was pleased (v. 22), “we are not told how they reached the decision, whether all the members were consulted, or whether the membership expressed agreement with the apostles and elders. The apostles and elders led in the agreement as they did in the discussion.”<sup>10</sup> Those who abuse Acts 15 confuse approval or being pleased over some action with direct participation in decision-making.

To assume that women must have spoken and participated in these meetings is to make the same kind of assumption that our Methodist friends do with the household of Lydia

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10 H. Leo Boles, *Gospel Advocate Commentaries*, Acts, 241.

(Acts 16:15). They assume the baptism included infants because they assume infants were in the household. These assumptions involve contradicting other passages of the Bible. Such assumptions cannot be necessarily inferred into the text.

Since the “whole church” (v. 22) was in one place, women could not have spoken and participated in any discussion (1 Cor. 14:34-35, cf. v. 26).

God was directly involved in these meetings of Acts 15. Unlike our business meetings today, God called this meeting. Paul said he went “by revelation” (Gal. 2:2). Furthermore, when the decision was made about circumcision, it was made by the Holy Spirit (v. 28). I hardly think we could attribute some of the decisions we make in business meetings to the Holy Spirit.

What took place in Acts 15 is not parallel to business meetings. Acts 15 would be more parallel to having some public discussion (debate) on a doctrinal matter.<sup>11</sup>

*The speeches* (vv. 6-21). The apostles and elders came together to consider the question at hand. This was the second public meeting (v. 6). In the three speeches the apostles appealed to command, approved example and necessary inference.

**Peter spoke (vv. 7-11).** Peter rose up and spoke about what had happened at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10-11). Peter’s speech used *necessary inference*. Peter learned that he was to take the gospel to the house of Cornelius from the following four events: (a) the heavenly vision (10:9-16), (b) the Spirit’s instruction to follow the men who were sent for him (10:19-20), (c) the story of the angel at Cornelius’ household (v. 22), and (d) the Holy Spirit falling upon the house of Cornelius as Peter began to speak (10:44-47; 11:15).

He was not commanded to go to the Gentiles. Rather, Peter *inferred* from these events that the Gentiles are gospel subjects as well as Jews. Notice how he began his sermon at Cornelius’ household. He said, “I *perceive* that God shows no partiality” (10:34, emphasis mine, DVR). That is a matter of necessary inference. He concluded his sermon by saying, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (10:47). Again, he *inferred* from the reception of the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles can be saved just like the Jews.

Peter went to Jerusalem and retold the story (Acts 11). He told them “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (v. 17). “To have withstood God would have been to refuse to accept the necessary implications of the Holy Spirit’s coming to Cornelius’ household.”<sup>12</sup> The Jews who heard his recounting of these events *concluded* (inferred), “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life” (v. 18).

Where in Acts 10 or 11 was Peter *commanded* to preach to the Gentiles? Rather, he learned that by *inference*.

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11 For more in Acts 15 and women in business meetings see my article *Guardian of Truth* XXXIX: 3 p. 18-20, February 2, 1995. (<http://www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume39/GOT039042.html>).

12 D. E. Koltenbah, *Truth Magazine*, XI, 11 pp. 15-18, August 1967.



When Peter came to the Jerusalem discussion (Acts 15) he told about the Holy Spirit falling upon the house of Cornelius (vv. 7-8). He *deduced* that God “made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (v. 9).

The conclusion was that Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised.

**Paul and Barnabas spoke (v. 12).** They *used approved examples*. They told about the examples of them preaching among the Gentiles with God’s approval (miracles and wonders). This is a reference to their work in the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). The miracles at Paphos (13:8-12), Iconium (14:3), and Lystra (14:8-10) demonstrated that their example of preaching to Gentiles was approved.

**James spoke (vv. 13-21).** James *used a command or direct statement from God*. James appealed to Amos 9:11-12 which specifically said that those who may seek the Lord included the Gentiles (v. 17). The conclusion was that Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised.

James proposed that they write to the Gentiles and warn them about bringing in heathen practices associated with idolatry (vv. 20-21).

*A letter was sent from the apostles and elders to the Gentiles in Antioch (vv. 22-29).* As James proposed, a letter was composed and sent by the hand of Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas (v. 22). The letter had seven fundamental points.

1. We hear that some unsettle you by their teaching (vv. 23-24).
2. We (the apostles) have given no such command (v. 24). We are not behind or even in agreement with these teachers.
3. We are united on this (v. 25a).
4. The men we send will tell you the same thing (vv. 25b-27). Paul, Barnabas, and the other men sent with them will tell you orally what we are saying by letter.
5. The answer is given by the Holy Spirit (v. 28a).
6. Add no greater burden (v. 28). To require circumcision would be adding a burden that God did not.
7. Abstain from things associated with idolatry (v. 29, cf. v. 20). (a) Things offered to idols. Meat sacrificed in honor of idols was also eaten at feasts that honored idols. This was forbidden.<sup>13</sup> (b) Blood. Idol worshippers would drink the blood of sacrifices. (c) Things strangled. This refers to meat not properly bled. (d) Sexual immorality. Though any and all fornication would be wrong, this refers to the sexual immorality connected with idolatry.

## The Church at Antioch Received the Letter (vv. 30-35)

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13 Paul wrote to the Corinthians that eating meat in honor of an idol was wrong (1 Cor. 10:20-21). However, merely eating the meat (not in a feast to honor the idol) was not wrong (1 Cor. 8:8; 10:25-26). Barnes argues about verse 20: “James advised that the Christians at Antioch be recommended to abstain from this. To partake of that food might not be morally wrong (1 Cor 8:4), but it would give occasion for scandal and offence; and, therefore, as a matter of expediency, it was advised that they should abstain from it” (*Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

*Rejoiced over its encouragement* (vv. 30-32). When those carrying the letter arrived in Antioch, they assembled the church and delivered the message (v. 30). They rejoiced over the message and were encouraged (v. 31).<sup>14</sup>

*The brethren departed* (vv. 33-35). Judas and Silas were prophets who spent time exhorting and strengthening the brethren (v. 32).<sup>15</sup> The brethren at Antioch sent the messengers back with greetings to the apostles (v. 33). However, Silas, Paul, and Barnabas stayed in Antioch preaching and teaching (vv. 34-35).

## **Beginning the Second Journey (vv. 36-41)**

*Paul and Barnabas disagree over John Mark* (vv. 36-38). After some time passed, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go back and revisit the churches that were established on the first trip to see how they were doing (v. 36). Barnabas wanted to take John Mark (v. 37). But, Paul had lost confidence in him since he turned back on the first trip (v. 38; cf. 13:13). Paul thought he had displayed weakness and was not reliable. Barnabas thought he should be given a second chance.<sup>16</sup> “Perhaps the *combination* of Paul’s and Barnabas’ attitudes was good for Mark. Paul’s attitude would have impressed him with the seriousness of the weakness he had displayed, and Barnabas’ manifestation of confidence would have encouraged him to make good on his second chance.”<sup>17</sup> John Mark later regained Paul’s confidence (2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24; Col. 4:10-11).

*Paul and Barnabas separated* (vv. 39-41). Each one had such strong feelings about the matter that they parted ways (v. 39). There were no ill feelings, animosity, or hostility toward each other. They each took the course that his judgment deemed appropriate.<sup>18</sup> Barnabas and John Mark sailed to Cyprus (v. 39). Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia (vv. 40-41).

## **Questions**

1. What prompted the discussion in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What does “no small dissension and dispute” (v. 2) mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14 As a practical matter, when we hear sermons and classes that merely confirm what we already know to be true, it is encouraging.

15 The brethren were strengthened by the *word* that was preached rather than the personality of the speaker or some social activity.

16 Perhaps his thinking was influenced by the fact that they were kin (Col. 4:10).

17 Johnny Stringer, *Truth Commentaries, Acts*, 318.

18 Their difference was not doctrinal, but a matter of judgment. This was not a matter where God had legislated.

3. What was the purpose for sending Paul and Barnabas to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you show that this was not a case of a decision-making meeting where women participated? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many public and how many private meetings took place? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. How does Acts 15 show that command, approved example and necessary inference are the ways to establish Bible authority? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What did Peter say in his speech (vv. 7-11)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What did Paul and Barnabas say in their speech (v. 12)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What did James say in his speech (vv. 13-21)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What is the point being made about unity (v. 25)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Acts 16****Lesson 15**  
**Starting the Second Journey****Outline****I. Churches of the First Journey Revisited** (vv. 1-5)

- A. *Timothy joined Paul and Silas* (vv. 1-3)
- B. *The churches were doing well* (vv. 4-5)

**II. From Antioch (of Pisidia) to Philippi** (vv. 6-12)

- A. *From Antioch to Troas* (vv. 6-8)
- B. *From Troas to Philippi* (vv. 9-12)
  1. *The call to Macedonia* (vv. 9-10)
  2. *The move to Philippi* (vv. 11-12)

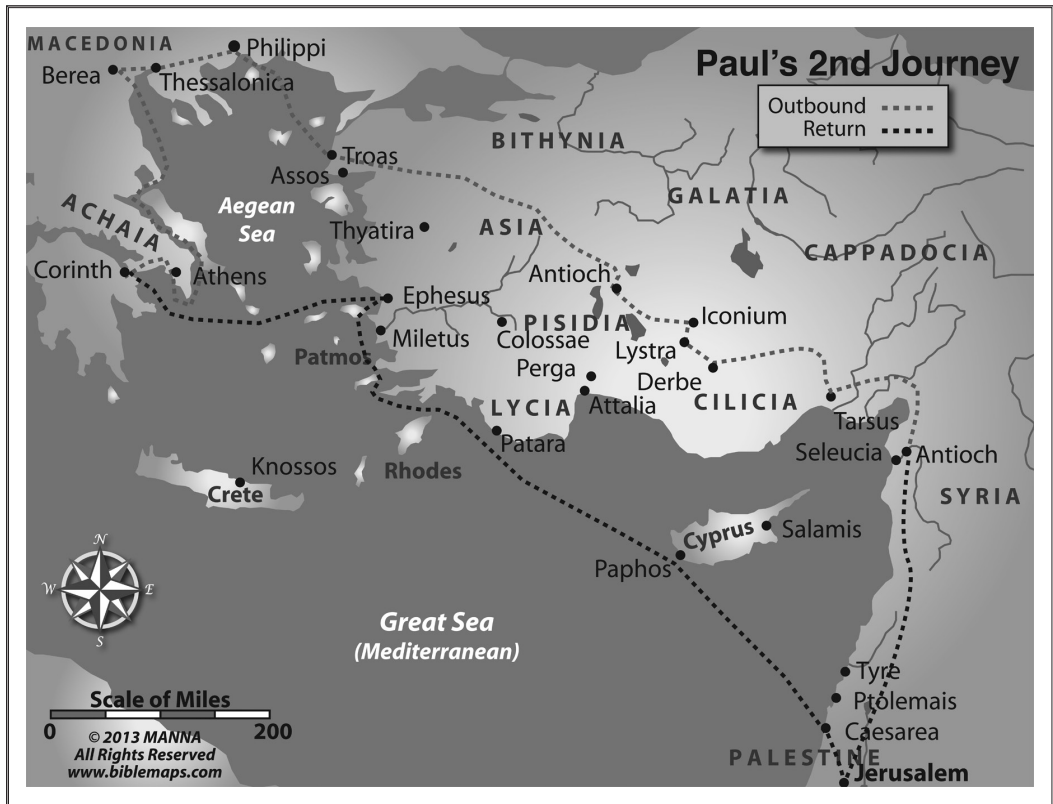
**III. At Philippi** (vv. 13-40)

- A. Conversion of Lydia (vv. 13-15)
- B. Damsel with spirit of divination (vv. 16-18)
- C. Paul and Silas imprisoned (vv. 19-24)
- D. Conversion of the jailor (vv. 25-34)
- E. Released from jail and departure (vv. 35-40)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 16:10**

*Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

The second missionary journey is found in Acts 16-18. The trip actually begins at the end of the previous chapter (15:36-41). Before this chapter begins, remember Paul and his new traveling companion, Silas, have journeyed through Syria and Cilicia. Chapter sixteen covers revisiting the churches established on the first journey and the beginning of the work in Macedonia.



## Churches of the First Journey Revisited (vv. 1-5)

*Timothy joined Paul and Silas* (vv. 1-3). Paul and Silas revisited churches in Derbe and Lystra that were established on the first journey. There<sup>1</sup> they connected with a disciple named Timothy.<sup>2</sup>

His mother was a Jew and his father a Greek. He was well known and well respected by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him and help in the work. So, he had him circumcised. This would allow Timothy to have influence among the Jews who knew his father was Greek.<sup>3</sup>

*The churches were doing well* (vv. 4-5). As they continued to travel and preach, they delivered the decrees that were determined by the apostles and elders (cf. 15:22-29). Through their work, the churches were strengthened and increased in number. Here is another progress report.

- 1 We can safely assume Lystra since it was the last city just mentioned.
- 2 He was probably converted on Paul's first missionary journey. Paul calls him his son in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2).
- 3 In this case, he was merely meeting social customs to have greater influence. However, in the case of Titus, when pressure was put on by Judaizing teachers, Paul refused to have him circumcised (Gal. 2:3-5).

## From Antioch (of Pisidia) to Philippi (vv. 6-12)

*From Antioch to Troas* (vv. 6-8). The text doesn't specifically mention Antioch however, we assume that it was visited since it was Paul's intent to revisit the churches established (cf. 15:36). They traveled through Phrygia<sup>4</sup> and regions of Galatia<sup>5</sup> but were forbidden to preach in Asia.<sup>6</sup> How they were forbidden we are not told.

They came to Mysia<sup>7</sup> and tried to go to Bithynia,<sup>8</sup> but the Spirit of God did not permit them. God had other plans so they went to Troas.

*From Troas to Philippi* (vv. 9-12). At Troas, Paul received the call to go to Macedonia (vv. 9-10). He had a vision of a man from Macedonia saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (v. 9). He concluded that the Lord had called him to preach the gospel there. Luke began using the word "we" at verse 10. Thus, he has now joined Paul, Silas, and Timothy in their travels. They traveled from Troas to Philippi (vv. 11-12).

## At Philippi (vv. 13-40)

*Conversion of Lydia* (vv. 13-15). On the Sabbath day Paul and company went to the riverside where some women regularly met for prayer (v. 13).<sup>9</sup> There they met a woman named Lydia. What do we know about her?

**She was from Thyatira**<sup>10</sup> (v. 14). It was located in Asia Minor some 250 – 300 miles away from Philippi. Perhaps she had traveled to Philippi on business selling her purple.

**She sold purple** (v. 14). She sold a very expensive dye used by the rich (cf. Luke 16:19). She seems to have a successful business.<sup>11</sup>

**She was religious** (vv. 13-14). The fact that she had gathered with other women for prayer tells us how religious she was (v. 13). She worshiped God (v. 14).<sup>12</sup> She was also receptive to the gospel (v. 14).

**The Lord opened her heart** (v. 14). What does that mean? How did the Lord open her heart? The Lord operated on the heart through the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The message preached pricked the heart (Acts 2:37). The context tells us how this was done with Lydia. Notice that the text says she "heard us" (v. 14). This is prior to the text saying "The Lord opened her

4 A region in West Central Asia Minor.

5 Commentators differ over whether this refers to the Northern or Southern region of Galatia. It most likely refers to the Southern region (which would include Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe). For a more thorough discussion see Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 567-569.

6 This is not the continent but the Roman Province in the western part of Asia Minor.

7 A Province in Northwestern Asia Minor.

8 In the northern part of Asia Minor.

9 To reach others with the gospel, they went to where the people were rather than (as we often expect) expect that people were going to come to them if they were interested.

10 Revelation 1:11.

11 Success and spirituality are not enemies. Business (work) and spirituality are not enemies.

12 She was either a Gentile who was God fearing (like Cornelius) or a convert to the Jewish religion.

heart” to “heed the things spoken” (v. 14). The Lord did not open her heart so she would listen, for she had already heard! This simply means that the gospel (that she willingly heard) pricked her heart so that she willingly obeyed.<sup>13</sup>

**What she did in her conversion** (vv. 14-15). She heard (v. 14). She believed (v. 14). She was baptized (v. 15). Here again is a progress report.

**Her household was baptized** (v. 15). The fact that her household (family) was baptized shows the influence she had on her family. This passage is used by those who teach infants can be baptized. They contend that her household included infants. They assume Lydia was married.<sup>14</sup> They assume she had children. They assume if she had children they were infants. They also assume that if she had infant children they were with her. Those who are to be baptized are sinners (Acts 22:16), who believe (Mark 16:16), and repent of their sins (Acts 2:38).

*Damsel with spirit of divination* (vv. 16-18). A slave girl who was demon possessed had been used by her masters to make them money. They claimed she was a fortune teller.<sup>15</sup> For several days she followed Paul and his companions saying they were servants of God proclaiming salvation (v. 17). Being annoyed<sup>16</sup> at her, Paul cast the demon out of her (v. 18).

*Paul and Silas imprisoned* (vv. 19-24). When the masters of the slave girl saw that they could no longer use her to make money, they were upset. They had no sense of joy over the girl’s restoration. They ignored the fact a miracle had been performed. So, they captured Paul and Silas and brought them to the authorities claiming that these men troubled the city teaching things that were unlawful for Romans to receive or observe (vv. 20-21).<sup>17</sup> So, they stripped Paul and Silas, beat them, cast them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks.

*Conversion of the jailor* (vv. 25-34). The imprisonment of Paul and Silas led to the conversion of the jailor himself. Consider the following about his conversion.

**The background** (vv. 25-29). Having been arrested, beaten, thrown in the inner prison, and confined in stocks, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God (v. 25). They were not bitter or filled with self-pity. Their lack of despair demonstrated their Christianity was real to them.<sup>18</sup> There was an earthquake (caused by God) that opened the doors and loosed everyone’s chains. When the jailor saw what had happened, he took his sword and was going to kill himself, thinking all the prisoners had escaped.<sup>19</sup> Paul stopped him saying that all the prisoners were still there, thus there was no need to do himself harm (v. 28). The jailor ran in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas (v. 29).

13 The opening of the heart is not an arbitrary opening of one heart and not another by God. If so, God would be a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11), the gospel would be powerless (Rom. 1:16), man would not have free will (Rom. 6), and the unopened heart would be God’s fault.

14 If she was married, Luke makes no mention of her husband.

15 Luke doesn’t state that she actually could tell the future, but merely states that was the claim.

16 Paul didn’t want to be associated with one who was demon possessed. There are some people you don’t want in your camp. Furthermore, he no doubt felt sorry for such a person who was possessed and misused.

17 This charge was untrue. They seem to be trying to appeal to the rulers that these men are a real threat to society.

18 How one handles his faith has everything to do with reaching others (cf. Rom. 3:24).

19 Under Roman law he would be held accountable if the prisoners escaped.



**The question** (v. 30). When he brought them out he asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” No doubt the jailor had some knowledge of the work these men had been doing in the city. He noted their great faith as they sang and prayed. He had to connect the earthquake with what these men were doing – thus realizing that what these men believed and taught was real. His question was sincere. He realized that he was lost and had a need. He understood that there was something he must do.<sup>20</sup> He was in search of the most important thing – the salvation of his soul (cf. Matt. 16:26).

**The answer** (vv. 31-32). He was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 31). Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and his family (v.32). This does not mean that he would be saved by faith alone. James said it is not by faith only (Jas. 2:24). If salvation is by faith alone, then repentance is not essential (cf. Acts 2:38; 17:30-31). The term “believe” or “faith” can stand for obedience.<sup>21</sup> After he was told to believe, he demonstrated his repentance (v. 33), and was baptized (v. 33). Then the text describes him as “having believed” (v. 34).

**The response** (vv. 33-34). He believed what he heard.<sup>22</sup> Else why take the actions he took? He repented as evidenced by washing their stripes (v. 33). Immediately, he and his family were baptized (v. 33). Here again is a progress report.

**The urgency** (v. 33). The jailor obeyed the gospel the same hour of the night even though the hour was already late (v. 25). Why was this so urgent? Life is uncertain. No one knows when he or she may die (Jas. 4:14). The day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night (2 Pet. 3:10).

*Released from jail and departure* (vv. 35-40). When morning came, the officials sent officers to the jailor saying, “Let those men go” (v. 35).<sup>23</sup> The jailor reported the good news to his new brethren, telling them to “go in peace” (v. 36). Paul refused to go without the officials coming themselves and publicly releasing them (v. 37). The beating was open and public with no trial. The beating and imprisonment without a trial was unlawful for Roman citizens.<sup>24</sup> The public release would acknowledge that their treatment of Paul and Silas was wrong. Furthermore, it would encourage the new converts in Philippi. When the officials heard that they were Romans, they came and pleaded with them to leave the city (v. 39).

They didn’t leave town immediately. They first went to the house of Lydia and encouraged the brethren (v. 40). Then they departed from the city.

Notice that Luke reverts to using “they” instead of “we” as Paul and Silas leave Philippi (v. 40). Thus, Luke stayed at Philippi for a while and would join Paul later on the third journey (Acts 20:6).

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20 He understood the necessity of obedience (Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21; 1 Pet. 1:22).

21 In Romans 10 Paul states that some have not “obeyed” (v. 16). In proof of that he quotes an Old Testament passage that says they did not “believe”. Thus, “believe” and “obeyed” are the same in this context.

22 He must have heard preaching about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Other sermons in Acts focused on the resurrection. Furthermore, how could he believe without the evidence?

23 Why they decided to let them go we are not told. Some think that they associated the earthquake with Paul and Silas. It may simply be that they felt one night in jail was sufficient to punish them.

24 Paul and Silas were Jews by nationality, but Roman citizens because of where they were born.

## Questions

1. What two companions joined Paul and Silas on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What do we know about Timothy? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised and didn't have Titus circumcised? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What progress reports are given in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What does it mean that the Lord opened Lydia's heart? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. How do you answer the contention that Lydia's household being baptized means that infants were baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Why were Paul and Silas arrested and put in prison? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What practical things can we learn from the fact that Paul and Silas were praying and singing in prison? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How would you prove that verse 31 is not teaching salvation by faith alone? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Why did Paul refuse to leave prison when the jailer said they could leave? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 17****Lesson 16  
From Thessalonica to Athens****Outline****From Thessalonica to Athens****I. At Thessalonica** (vv. 1-9)

- A. *Preached Christ in the synagogue – many are converted* (vv. 1-4)
- B. *Unbelieving Jews persecuted and assaulted the house of Jason* (vv. 5-9)

**II. At Berea** (vv. 10-15)

- A. *Preached Christ in the synagogue and many were converted* (vv. 10-12)
- B. *Jews of Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred the people* (v. 13)
- C. *Paul sent away to Athens (Timothy and Silas went later)* (vv. 14-15)

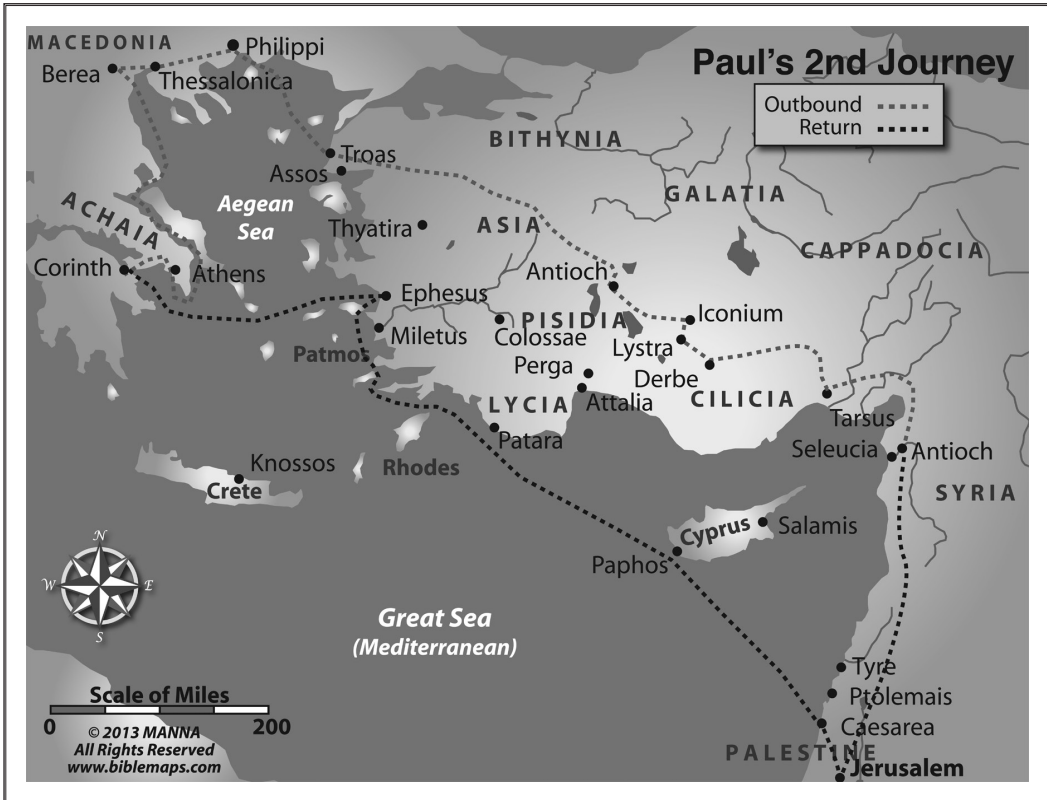
**III. At Athens** (vv. 16-34)

- A. *The situation in Athens* (vv. 16-21)
  - 1. City wholly given to idolatry (v. 16)
  - 2. Paul preached and disputed with them (vv. 17-18)
  - 3. Paul taken and questioned (vv. 19-21)
- B. *Paul's sermon on Mar's Hill* (vv. 22-31)
  - 1. The Athenians are ignorant of God (vv. 22-23)
  - 2. The Living God (vv. 24-29)
    - a. Made the world (vv. 24-25)
    - b. Made man (vv. 26-29)
  - 3. God demands repentance (vv. 30-31)
    - a. Because He will judge the world (v. 31)
    - b. In view of the assurance of the resurrection of Christ (v. 31)
- C. *Response to Paul's sermon* (vv. 32-34)
  - 1. Some mocked (vv. 32-33)
  - 2. Some believed (v. 34)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 17:2**

*Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.*

The second missionary journey continues (Acts 16-18). This chapter takes Paul and Silas to Thessalonica, Berea, and then down to Athens. They leave Philippi, pass through Amphipolis and Apollonia and then come to Thessalonica.



### At Thessalonica (vv. 1-9)

*Preached Christ in the synagogue – many are converted (vv. 1-4).* Arriving at Thessalonica, Paul went to a synagogue of the Jews (v. 1).<sup>1</sup> He spent three Sabbath days reasoning from the Old Testament with them. He explained<sup>2</sup> and demonstrated (from the prophecies) that Christ should suffer and rise from the dead. He showed that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of the Old Testament prophecy (v. 3). Some of the Jews were persuaded along with a great multitude of devout Greeks. Some prominent women were converted as well. Here is another progress report.

*Unbelieving Jews persecuted and assaulted the house of Jason (vv. 5-9).* Some Jews who did not believe the message of Paul and Silas became envious over those who were converted

- 1 Note that Paul took the gospel to the people rather than expecting them to come to him. We often advertise our preaching efforts and expect the world to come to us. Perhaps we could reach more if we took the gospel to them (i.e. to their home).
- 2 Paul didn't just read from the Scriptures or just cite references, but developed his point and argumentation. This is what Ezra and the other teachers did (Neh. 8:7-8). When talking to prospects about the gospel, don't just give them a Bible reference, but reason with them and develop your point.

and decided to stir up a mob. They gathered men from the marketplace to create a mob and stir up the city (v. 5).<sup>3</sup> They attacked the house of Jason, the host of Paul and Silas. Not finding Paul there, the city rulers took Jason and some brethren, charging them with turning the world upside down and causing trouble in this city (v. 6).<sup>4</sup> They charged that claiming Jesus as king was trying to rival Caesar and threaten a revolt (v. 7). However, Jesus is king over a spiritual kingdom (John 18:36). The rulers took security (bond) from Jason and the brethren and then let them go.<sup>5</sup>

### **At Berea (vv. 10-15)**

*Preached Christ in the synagogue and many were converted* (vv. 10-12). The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away from Thessalonica to Berea because of the turmoil created there (v. 10). Paul again went into the synagogue of the Jews. These Jews who listened to him were open minded. They received the message with "great eagerness" (NASV). They "gladly listened to the message" (LBP). Their open mind was not gullible. They tested what they heard by the Scriptures to see if it was true (v. 11). They searched through the Scriptures on a daily basis. As a result many of the Jews believed as well as a number of Greeks and prominent women (v. 12). This progress report shows the gospel is being effective.

*Jews of Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred the people* (v. 13). Soon, Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea when they heard Paul was working there. They stirred up the city here as well.

*Paul sent away to Athens (Timothy and Silas went later)* (vv. 14-15). Immediately, Paul was sent away to Athens. Timothy and Silas stayed behind. However, Paul sent word to Timothy and Silas to come to him as quickly as possible.<sup>6</sup>

### **At Athens (vv. 16-34)**

*The situation in Athens* (vv. 16-21). As Paul waited on Timothy and Silas he took note of the fact that the whole city of Athens was given to idolatry (v. 16). He went to the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews and Gentiles and any whom he encountered in the marketplace

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- 3 "The forum, or market-place, was the place where the idle assembled, and where those were gathered together that wished to be employed, Matt 20:3. Many of these would be of abandoned character, the idle, the dissipated, and the worthless, and, therefore, just the materials for a mob. It does not appear that they felt any particular interest in the subject; but they were, like other mobs, easily excited, and urged on to any acts of violence" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).
  - 4 Those making the charge had deliberately stirred up the city. Often people charge others with the offense that they themselves are doing.
  - 5 The purpose of the bond we are not told. It could be that it insured that Paul and Silas would leave the city (cf. v. 10 where they immediately left). Or, some have supposed that it assured the officials that they would not lead an effort to subvert the emperor (cf. v. 7).
  - 6 "Though Luke does not tell us, Silas and Timothy must have come to Athens as Paul commanded, for Paul later sent Timothy from Athens to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:1-5). He evidently sent Silas, also, to some location in Macedonia, for Silas and Timothy later came to him from Macedonia while he was in Corinth (Acts 18:5)" (Johnny Stringer, *Truth Commentaries, Acts*, 354).

(v. 17). He disputed with the Epicurean<sup>7</sup> and Stoic<sup>8</sup> philosophers. Some asked, “What does the babblers want to say?” A babbler (literally “seed picker”) is one who picks up scraps of wisdom from others. They charged him with proclaiming foreign gods because he taught Jesus was raised from the dead (v. 18).

Paul was taken to the Areopagus<sup>9</sup> (Mar’s Hill) and questioned about this new doctrine he taught. The people of Athens relished in hearing new things, thus they wanted to know more about Paul’s teaching since it was strange to them (vv. 19-21).

*Paul’s Sermon on Mar’s Hill* (vv. 22-31). Paul’s sermon had three points:

1. **The Athenians are ignorant of God** (vv. 22-23). Paul began his sermon by pointing out that they are very religious as evidenced by all the objects of worship. He took note of an altar that had an inscription, “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD” (perhaps to cover any gods that might have been overlooked). He used that as a launching point to tell them about the God of heaven, whom they did not know.
2. **The Living God** (vv. 24-29). God made the world and all things in it (v. 24). He is the ruler of heaven and earth (v. 24). He doesn’t dwell in a temple made by man (He is not contained within the walls of a temple like an idol). He doesn’t depend upon man for his existence (like an idol does), but man depends upon him (v. 25).

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7 Epicureans followed the teaching of the philosopher Epicurus (342-270 B.C.). “They denied that the world was created by God, and that the gods exercised any care or providence over human affairs, and also the immortality of the soul. ... One of the distinguishing doctrines of Epicurus was that pleasure was the summum bonum, or chief good, and that virtue was to be practiced only as it contributed to pleasure. By pleasure, however, Epicurus did not mean sensual and groveling appetites and degraded vices, but rational pleasure, properly regulated and governed. ... Confident in the belief that the world was not under the administration of a God of justice, they gave themselves up to the indulgence of every passion of the infidels of their time, and were the exact example of the frivolous and fashionable multitudes of all times, that live without God, and that seek pleasure as their chief good” (Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

8 Stoics followed the teaching of Zeno of Cyprus (360- 264 B.C.). “The doctrines of the sect were, that the universe was created by God; that all things were fixed by Fate; that even God was under the dominion of fatal necessity; that the Fates were to be submitted to; that the passions and affections were to be suppressed and restrained; that happiness consisted in the insensibility of the soul to pain; and that a man should gain an absolute mastery over all the passions and affections of his nature. They were stern in their views of virtue, and, like the Pharisees, prided themselves on their own righteousness. They supposed that matter was eternal, and that God was either the animating principle or soul of the world, or that all things were a part of God. They fluctuated much in their views of a future state; some of them holding that the soul would exist only until the destruction of the universe, and others that it would finally be absorbed into the divine essence and become a part of God” (Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

9 “It seems that Paul is brought to the hill where the celebrated court, the supreme court of Athens, often held its meetings. This hill was almost in the middle of the city, but little remains of its summit to help us determine what it looked like in Paul’s day” (Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 624).



God made man (vv. 26-29). All nations are made from one blood (all men came from Adam). He is the God of all nations. God has "determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings" (v. 26). This is a statement of God's providence. He rules in the nations of men (Dan. 4:25). God created a world that He could control for His purpose (Rev. 4:11).<sup>10</sup> Some think this refers to God directly controlling how long a nation lasts and how much territory they control. Though God has all under his control, that doesn't mean He directly causes all things to happen. There is a difference in what God causes and what He allows. "This passage may have reference to this divine control over the nations. Remember, however, that regardless of uncertainty as to Paul's precise meaning, the point he is making is clear: *God is not the God of only one nation but has manifested an active interest in all nations.*"<sup>11</sup>

What God has done in creating the world and man (and controlling it as he does) is to cause man to seek the Lord (v. 27). Paul pictures the Pagan who considers creation as one groping (feeling) in the dark for God (cf. Rom 1:20).

Since we are the offspring of God, we are created by God and depend upon God (v. 27) and ought not to think of God as the Athenians did in terms of gold, silver, or stone (v. 28).

3. **God demands repentance** (vv. 30-31). Prior to the coming of Christ, God overlooked the ignorance of man (i.e. the ignorance of the Pagan world), but now commands all men (Jew and Gentiles) to repent. The reason given is that He will judge the world (Jews and Gentiles) by Christ, the judge (v. 31). Repentance is demanded in view of the assurance of the resurrection of Christ (v. 31).

*Response to Paul's sermon* (vv. 32-34). There was mixed reaction to Paul's sermon. When he mentioned the resurrection of Christ, some mocked (ridiculed the idea). Others said they would hear more from him later. (v. 32). So, Paul was dismissed and he left (v. 33). Some accepted what he preached and believed, among them was Dionysius who is identified as "the Areopagite" (one of the judges at Mars Hill cf. footnote 9). Another convert was a woman named Damaris. Others were converted as well. Here we have another progress report.

Paul had success in all three cities visited in this chapter.

## Questions

1. List the progress reports found in this chapter. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10 "Nations rise and fall, but it is not blind chance or hard fate. Thus there is an interplay between God's will and man's activities, difficult as it is for us to see with our shortened vision" (A.T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

11 Johnny Stringer, *ibid*, 363

2. For class discussion: How could we do better (in light of Paul's practice) in taking the gospel to the people in contrast to expecting them to come to us? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What use did Paul make of the Scriptures besides reading them at Thessalonica? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why was the house of Jason attacked? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What charges were made against Paul at Thessalonica? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. How were the people of Berea different from those in Thessalonica? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What was the point of calling Paul a "babbling"? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. How would you summarize Paul's sermon at Athens? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What does "at the times of this ignorance God overlooked" mean? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What reasons are given for repentance? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 18****Lesson 17**  
**Finishing the Second Journey and Starting the Third****Outline****Finishing the Second Journey and Starting the Third****I. At Corinth** (vv. 1-17)

- A. *Paul began his work in the city* (vv. 1-4)
- B. *His work continued with help and opposition* (vv. 5-11)
  - 1. Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia (v. 5)
  - 2. Opposition from the Jews (v. 6)
  - 3. Paul continued there a year and a half with success (vv. 7-11)
- C. *Paul before Gallio* (vv. 12-17)

**II. Return Trip to Antioch** (vv. 18-22)

- A. *From Corinth to Ephesus* (vv. 18-21)
  - 1. Priscilla and Aquila traveled with Paul as far as Ephesus (vv. 18-19a)
  - 2. Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue (v. 19b)
  - 3. Paul left for Jerusalem (vv. 20-21)
- B. *From Ephesus to Jerusalem and on to Antioch* (v. 22)

**III. Beginning the Third Journey** (vv. 23-28)

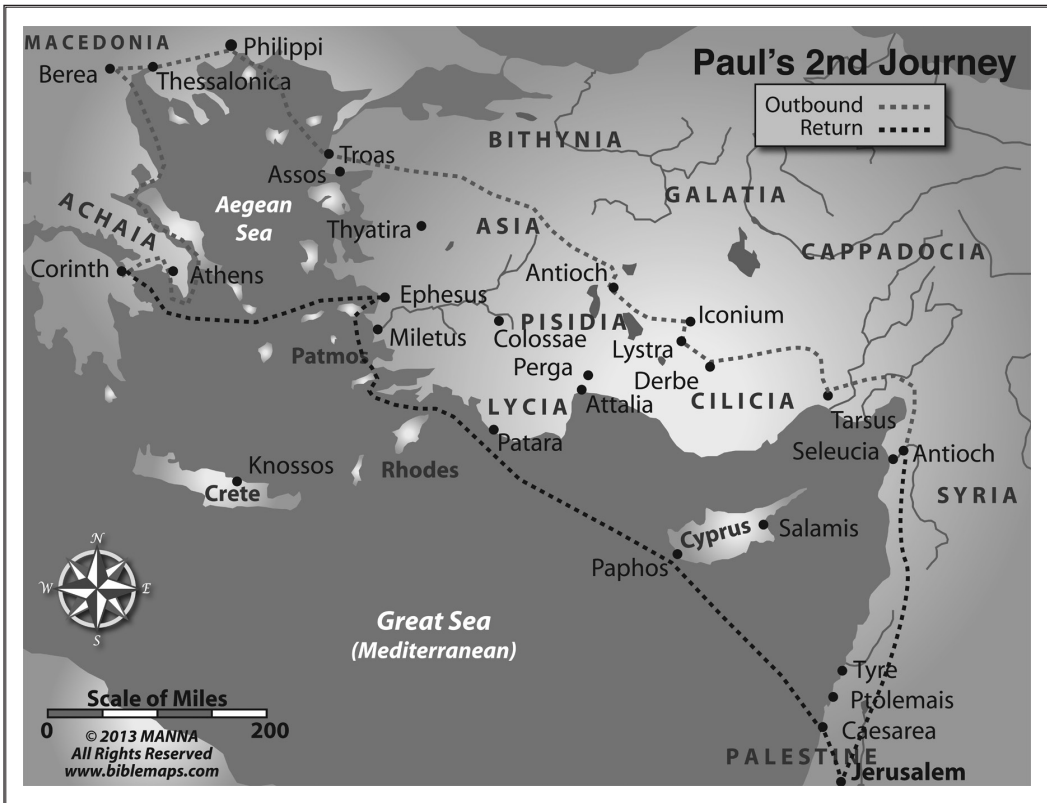
- A. *Paul strengthened the disciples of Galatia and Phrygia* (v. 23)
- B. *Apollos at Ephesus* (vv. 24-28)
  - 1. Apollos came to Ephesus (vv. 24-25a)
    - a. Great speaker (v. 24)
    - b. Well versed in Scripture (vv. 24-25a)
  - 2. Taught well – but lacking in one area (v. 25b)
  - 3. Aquila and Priscilla corrected him (v. 26)
  - 4. Went to Achaia (vv. 27-28)
    - a. With recommendation of the Ephesians (v. 27)
    - b. Helped those who believe (v. 27)
    - c. Publicly refuted the Jews (v. 28)

**Key Verses that Summarize the Chapter****Acts 18:8, 11**

*8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.*

*11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

In this chapter, Paul finishes his second missionary journey and begins his third. He leaves Athens and this chapter opens with his arrival in Corinth. From there he moves to Ephesus. Then he heads to Jerusalem (intending to make it there for Pentecost) landing at Caesarea. From Jerusalem he goes back to Antioch and starts over again with the third journey.



### At Corinth (vv. 1-17)

*Paul began his work in the city* (vv. 1-4). When Paul got to Corinth he found Aquila<sup>1</sup> and Priscilla who apparently were already Christians. They had recently come from Italy due to Claudius (the Roman Emperor) driving all the Jews from Rome.<sup>2</sup> They came to Corinth, then went to Ephesus (v. 18) and back to Rome at some point (cf. Rom. 16:3). Paul stayed with them as he did his preaching in the city. They shared the same trade – they were tentmakers (v. 3).

Paul went to the synagogue every Sabbath and reasoned with Jews and Greeks (v. 4).

*His work continued with help and opposition* (vv. 5-11). Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia (v. 5). They had been left in Berea (17:14). Timothy came to Paul in Athens

1 Aquila was born in Pontus which was just east of Bithynia on the Black Sea in Northeastern Asia Minor.

2 We cannot be sure what caused Claudius to expel the Jews.

and was sent by Paul to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:1-5)<sup>3</sup>. So, Silas came from Berea and Timothy from Thessalonica.

When they arrived, Paul was “compelled by the Spirit” (v. 5, NKJV).<sup>4</sup> This means that he devoted all his time to spreading the word. Notice the connection between the coming of his fellow workers and his being “constrained in the Spirit”. When Timothy and Silas came from Macedonia they brought financial support for Paul (2 Cor. 11:6-8). This may have reference to his devoting full time to preaching (because of the support) in contrast to having to make tents prior to this (v. 3).

The message that Jesus is the Christ (v. 5) was opposed to the point that Paul shook his garments in a dramatic gesture to renounce them and said, “Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles” (v. 6).<sup>5</sup> He left the synagogue and moved his work of teaching to the house of Justus<sup>6</sup>, next door to the synagogue (v. 7).

Paul’s work was effective. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, was converted along with his family. Many in Corinth heard, believed, and were baptized (v. 8). We can appreciate the impact of the gospel when some of those being converted had been adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals, thieves, and drunkards (1 Cor. 6:9-11). What an amazing progress report.

The opposition was not surprising. Paul faced the same in every city. The Lord appeared to Paul in a vision telling him not to be afraid but keep preaching (v. 9). Paul was assured that no one would harm him, for the Lord had many people in that city (v. 10).<sup>7</sup>

Paul continued his work at Corinth for a year and a half (v. 11). Did that time include the “good while” of verse 18? What we do know is that Paul stayed at least 18 months if not longer.

*Paul before Gallio* (vv. 12-17). Those who opposed Paul’s teaching took him before Gallio’s judgment seat, charging that he “persuades men to worship contrary to the law” (v. 13). The “law” may have had reference to the law of Moses (for these Jews believed that Paul’s doctrine was opposed to Moses’ law). More likely it referred to the Roman law. “The Jews were saying, Paul is preaching a new religion – not like the Jewish religion – a religion not recognized by the laws of Rome. Josephus tells us that the Jews had been granted permission by the Romans to worship according to their own law. The Jews deliberately word the charge they make against Paul so that it could be taken with a double meaning, and are trying to tell Gallio that Paul’s doctrine was the introduction of something other than

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- 3 When Paul gets word from Timothy about how the church at Thessalonica is doing, he writes the 1 Thessalonian letter. The second letter was written from Corinth about a year later.
  - 4 Other translations: “pressed in the spirit” (KJV, YLT), “occupied in the word” (ESV), “constrained by the word” (ASV), “pressed in respect to the word” (Darby), “Paul began devoting himself completely to the word” (NASV), and “devoted himself exclusively to preaching” (NIV).
  - 5 Jesus taught that his disciples should not cast pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6). Paul is here following that principle.
  - 6 Many think this is the same man identified as Gaius (1 Cor. 1:14; Rom. 16:23). Reese quotes Ramsay who suggests that his full name was Gaius Titius Justus (Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 643-644). We cannot be sure if this is the same man.
  - 7 This simply means that God knew that, given the opportunity, many would obey.

old-time Judaism. Verse 15 will show that Gallio understood them to be more interested in defending their own law than Roman law.”<sup>8</sup>

As Paul was about to speak and defend himself against a false charge, Gallio dismissed the proceedings saying that if this were a matter of some crime he would hear it, but since it seemed to be a matter of their own law, they should see to it themselves (vv. 14-15). He then drove them out (v. 16).

When that happened, Sosthenes (the ruler of the synagogue)<sup>9</sup> was beaten (v. 17). Who beat him is a question based on manuscript differences. The KJV and NKJV say the Greeks beat him. If that was the case, they might have been bystanders who used the occasion to vent their hatred for the Jews. Other translations do not mention the Greeks but say “they all” laid hands on him and beat him. If this was the case, the Jews who accused Paul might have beaten Sosthenes (their leader) for not representing them well before Gallio. Whoever did it, Gallio ignored it.

### **Return Trip to Antioch (vv. 18-22)**

*From Corinth to Ephesus* (vv. 18-21). After staying a good while in Corinth, Paul started his trip toward Syria, taking Aquila and Priscilla with him. Before setting sail, they came to Cenchrea (less than 10 miles from Corinth). There Paul<sup>10</sup> had his hair cut off, for he had taken a vow.<sup>11</sup>

When Paul arrived at Ephesus, he entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews (v. 19). His work was received, for they asked him to stay longer (v. 20). However, he left saying that he was trying to get to Jerusalem for the coming feast (v. 21).<sup>12</sup> Why he felt the need to be there we are not told.

Before he left he told the brethren that he would return again to them “God willing” (v. 21, cf. Jas. 4:13-15). He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus (v. 19).

*From Ephesus to Jerusalem and on to Antioch* (v. 22). From Ephesus Paul sailed to Caesarea then went up to greet the church. This most likely refers to the church at Jerusalem since he was headed to Jerusalem (v. 21). Also, consider the language of going “up” to the church and then “down” to Antioch. His second missionary journey was completed.

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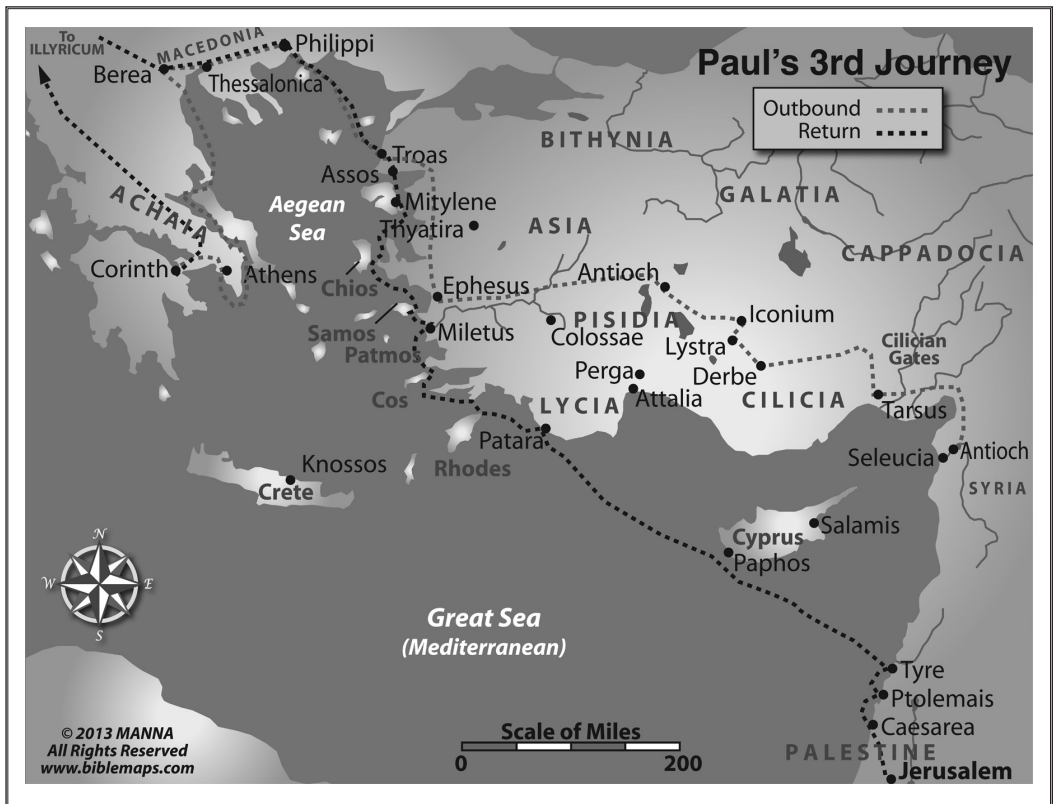
8 Gareth L. Reese, *ibid*, 648.

9 He either replaced Crispus when he was converted or was a ruler at the same time

10 There is some question as to who the “he” who had his hair cut is. Some think it refers to Aquila. However, Paul is the subject being discussed in verse 18. He remained a good while. He took leave. He sailed. Aquila and Priscilla were with him. He had his hair cut.

11 What was this vow? Luke does not tell us. It could have been the Nazarite vow (Num. 6:1-21). However, the text does not say. It was some type of voluntary vow made to God. We are not told here its purpose. It may have been in connection with thanksgiving for the deliverance from troubles or (if it is the Nazarite vow) an effort to influence the Jews.

12 This is probably Pentecost rather than the Passover. Reese argues for this saying, “There was no sailing on the Mediterranean until after Passover” (Gareth L. Reese, *ibid*, 655).



### Beginning the Third Journey (vv. 23-28)

*Paul strengthened the disciples of Galatia and Phrygia* (v. 23). After spending some time at Antioch, Paul started his third journey (Acts 18:23 – Acts 21). He visited the churches established on the first journey. His work here was to strengthen the brethren.<sup>13</sup>

*Apollos at Ephesus* (vv. 24-28). Meanwhile as Paul started his third trip, Apollos came to Ephesus (vv. 24-25). He was an eloquent man, a great speaker (v. 24) and well versed in Scripture (vv. 24-25a).

He did his job well in teaching (v. 25a). He was fervent (zealous) in spirit. He spoke with boldness (v.26). However, he was lacking in one area – he knew only the baptism of John (v. 25b). He must have understood and taught what John preached about Jesus being the Messiah that was promised. However, he was still practicing the baptism of John even though the New Covenant was underway.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Building up the saints (teaching them to observe all things – Matt. 28:18-20) is just as important as converting the lost.

<sup>14</sup> The difference in the baptism of John and the baptism of the Great Commission will be seen in the next chapter.

When Aquila and Priscilla heard him speak, they took him aside and taught him the way of God more accurately (v. 26)<sup>15</sup>. He was willing to learn and stood corrected. Though the text does not say here, we can safely assume that he was baptized in the name of Christ at this point. Evidence of that would be in the next chapter when others who only knew the baptism of John were baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 19:1-7).

Apollos decided to go to Achaia where Corinth was located. The Ephesian brethren wrote a letter of recommendation for those in Achaia to receive him.<sup>16</sup> When he arrived, he helped those who believed (those already converted at Corinth). Perhaps this is what Paul was talking about when he said he planted and Apollos watered (1 Cor. 3:6). Additionally, he publicly confronted the teaching of the Jews, refuting their error by showing that Jesus is the Christ (v. 28).

### Questions

1. What progress reports are given in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does "constrained in the spirit" (v. 5, NKJV) mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How effective was Paul's work at Corinth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In what way did Aquila and Priscilla help Paul in his work at Corinth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Where had Aquila and Priscilla lived? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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15 Here is a case of a woman teaching – even teaching and correcting a man. Yet she did so without violating the principle of teaching over a man (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

16 See comments in lesson 9 on Acts 9:26-28 about churches accepting members.



6. Why did Gallio dismiss the proceedings? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What kind of reception did Paul have at Ephesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Why did Paul not stay in Ephesus when the Jews asked him to stay? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What did Aquila and Priscilla correct in Apollos' teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What do we learn about women teaching from Priscilla's dealing with Apollos? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 19****Lesson 18  
At Ephesus****Outline****I. Twelve Disciples are Baptized and Receive the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-7)**

- A. *Had not received the Holy Spirit since they were only baptized with John's baptism (vv. 1-4)*
- B. *Baptized in the name of the Lord (v. 5)*
- C. *Received the Holy Spirit (v. 6)*
- D. *The number was twelve (v. 7)*

**II. Paul Preached and Disputed with the Jews (vv. 8-10)**

- A. *In the synagogue for about three months (vv. 8-9a)*
- B. *In the school of Tyrannus for two years (vv. 9b-10)*

**III. Miracles and Exorcists (vv. 11-20)**

- A. *God wrought unusual miracles by Paul (vv. 11-12)*
- B. *Exorcists exposed (vv. 13-17)*
- C. *Many obeyed (vv. 18-20)*

**IV. Paul Planned for a Future Journey (vv. 21-22)**

- A. *Planned to go to Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem and Rome (v. 21)*
- B. *Sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (v. 22)*

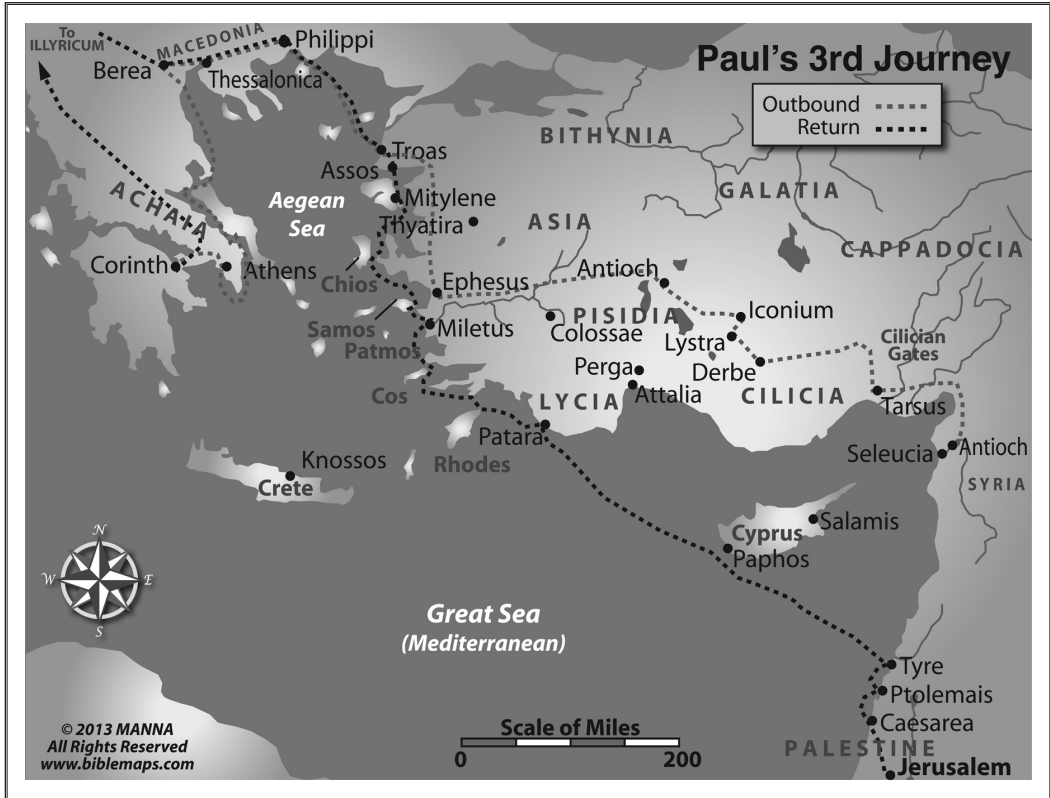
**V. Uproar over Idolatry (vv. 23-41)**

- A. *Demetrius stirred up the people (vv. 23-28)*
- B. *A demonstration in the theater (vv. 29-34)*
- C. *The city clerk appeased the people and dismissed the assembly (vv. 35-41)*
  1. *Since Ephesus was the guardian of the temple of Diana, ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly (vv. 35-36)*
  2. *If there were other charges, the courts were open (vv. 37-39)*
  3. *Dismissed the disorderly meeting (vv. 40-41)*

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 19:10**

*And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

In the last chapter (18:23), the third missionary journey begins. Paul revisits the churches established on the first journey. While Apollos is at Corinth, Paul arrives at Ephesus (v. 1). This chapter is devoted to his work in that city. He makes a brief visit there on the previous journey (18:18-21). When he leaves, he says he will return “God willing” (18:21). He leaves Aquila and Priscilla there as he moves on. He is now back as he promised.



## Twelve Disciples are Baptized and Receive the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-7)

*Had not received the Holy Spirit since they were only baptized with John's baptism* (vv. 1-4). Arriving at Ephesus, he found some disciples. These were not Christians for they had not been baptized in the name of the Lord (v. 5). This simply means they were learners, pupils or students of John's teaching.<sup>1</sup>

Paul asked if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed (v. 2).<sup>2</sup> They said, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit" (v. 2).<sup>3</sup> So Paul asked, "into what

- 1 "They were disciples of the teaching of Christianity *to the limited extent that John had proclaimed them*" (Johnny Stringer, Truth Commentaries, Acts, 389).
- 2 This is a reference to spiritual gifts that were received by the laying on of the Apostles' hands as evidenced by verse 6.
- 3 This most likely means that they didn't know they could receive the Holy Spirit or that He was available to be received. If they were disciples of John's teaching, they must have known something about there being a Holy Spirit (cf. John 1:33-34).

were you baptized?" (v. 3) or "on what basis" were you baptized.<sup>4</sup> They answered, "Into John's baptism" (v. 3).

Paul pointed out that John's baptism was to lead men to believe on Christ (v. 4),<sup>5</sup> which makes it different than the baptism of the Great Commission. The baptism of John was immersion (John 3:23) in water (Matt. 3:11) for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4). In that regard, it was no different than the baptism of the Great Commission. So in what ways were they different?

When one was baptized with John's baptism, he confessed his sins (Matt. 3:6). Under the Great Commission, one who desired to be baptized confessed his faith (Acts 8:37). Those baptized by John were told to later believe on Christ (Acts 19:4). Jesus taught that one was to believe and then be baptized (Mark 16:16). The baptism of John didn't put one in the kingdom (Matt. 3:1-2). One baptized in the name of Christ entered the kingdom of God (John 3:5). John's baptism ceased. The baptism of the Great Commission continues until the end of time (Matt. 28:18-20).

*Baptized in the name of the Lord* (v. 5). When these disciples understood the contrast and difference in the baptisms and that the New Covenant was now in force,<sup>6</sup> they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

*Received the Holy Spirit* (v. 6). Those who had been baptized received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of Paul's hands. This measure of the Spirit was the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14) that was only received by the laying on of an apostles' hand (Acts 8:14-15).

*The number was twelve* (v. 7). The number of the disciples who learned about baptism in the name of the Lord was twelve.

## **Paul Preached and Disputed with the Jews (vv. 8-10)**

*In the synagogue for about three months* (vv. 8-9a). As he did in other cities, he entered the synagogue. He spent three months persuading the people about the kingdom of God (v. 8). This message had to include that Jesus is the Messiah, he was raised from the dead to sit on his throne, and he is ruling and reigning now. His preaching was rejected by some who spoke evil of the Way.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Paul was forced to pull disciples away from the synagogue to another location (v. 9a).

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4 A.T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

5 This is the last reference to John the Baptist in the New Testament.

6 Verses 4-5 must be a summary of what Paul said to the twelve disciples, for verse 4 says nothing about baptism in the name of Christ. Yet they wanted to be baptized in the name of Christ (v. 5).

7 From this section, we learn that just because one has been baptized doesn't mean that their baptism fits the pattern of the New Testament.

8 Luke uses the terms "the Way" to designate Christianity, the way of the Lord (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

*In the school of Tyrannus for two years* (vv. 9b-10). We don't know who Tyrannus was or what arrangements were made for using the school or lecture room. He continued his teaching daily for two years. It was effective to the point that well beyond Ephesus the word of the Lord Jesus had been heard (v. 10).

### **Miracles and Exorcists (vv. 11-20)**

*God wrought unusual miracles by Paul* (vv. 11-12). Miracles were performed as evidence of the message preached (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3-4). All miracles are unusual by their nature, being supernatural. However, the miracles in this context were unusual in that they were without personal contact, showing a greater contrast to the exorcist efforts. Handkerchiefs<sup>9</sup> or aprons<sup>10</sup> were brought from Paul's body to the sick then diseases and evil spirits departed from those who made contact with the items.

*Exorcists exposed* (vv. 13-17). There were some traveling exorcists<sup>11</sup> who tried to use the name of the Lord to call out demons (v. 13). There were seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Sceva who tried this (v. 14). The evil spirit in the man on whom they tried their exorcism said he recognized Jesus and Paul, but not them (v. 15).<sup>12</sup> Then the man overpowered the seven and whipped them all. They fled from the house into the streets of Ephesus naked and wounded (v. 16). What a sight that must have been! How embarrassing! What a failure!

The report of this spread throughout Ephesus causing fear and the name of the Lord to be magnified (v. 17). The people saw the difference and concluded Paul's teaching was correct.

*Many obeyed* (vv. 18-20). Having seen the evidence, many believed (obeyed) and confessed their deeds or magical arts were a fraud (v. 18). Many brought their books about magic<sup>13</sup> and burned them in the presence of all (v. 19). The value was estimated to be about 50,000 pieces of silver.<sup>14</sup> What sacrifice they were willing to make! This was a very strong statement of renouncing the error they were leaving.

The word grew mightily and prevailed (v. 20). This simply means the word was being effective and people responded. Here again is a progress report.

### **Paul Planned for a Future Journey (vv. 21-22)**

*Planned to go to Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem and Rome* (v. 21). Paul had planned to go from Ephesus to Macedonia (which would include Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea) and Achaia (which includes Corinth), and then on to Jerusalem and finally Rome. As he later went through Macedonia and Achaia he gathered funds for the poor saints at Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15:25-26). After taking the funds to Jerusalem, he planned to go to Rome. He did, but not in the manner he thought. He would go as a prisoner after his arrest (Acts 21).

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9 A towel used to wipe sweat.

10 "Linen aprons used by servants and artisans (Martial XIV. 153). Paul did manual work at Ephesus (Acts 20:34) and so wore these aprons" (A. T. Robertson, *ibid*).

11 Those who claimed to be able to cast out evil spirits.

12 Even evil spirits recognized the difference in the power of God and that which was a fraud.

13 The books that gave them their spells, incantations and charms.

14 A piece of silver would be a day's wage for a common laborer.

*Sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia* (v. 22). Paul sent Timothy<sup>15</sup> and Erastus<sup>16</sup> ahead into Macedonia. The book of 1 Corinthians was written at this point after Timothy had left (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:7-11).<sup>17</sup> Paul stayed for a while longer at Ephesus.

### Uproar over Idolatry (vv. 23-41)

*Demetrius stirred up the people* (vv. 23-28). Not everyone was happy about the work Paul was doing. A man named Demetrius, who was a silversmith, stirred the people up by saying that the preaching of Paul was jeopardizing their business of selling shrines of Diana<sup>18</sup> and the temple of the goddess. His complaint indicated Paul's teaching that there were no gods made with hands (v. 26) had spread well beyond Ephesus. With Demetrius' stirring, the people became angry and shouted "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" (v. 28).

*A demonstration in the theater* (vv. 29-34). With the whole city in a tizzy, the crowd rushed into the theater<sup>19</sup> taking Gaius<sup>20</sup> and Aristarchus<sup>21</sup> (both of Macedonia) with them. Paul wanted to go in the theater, no doubt to defend himself and his companions against the charges. The disciples would not permit it (v. 30). Officials, who were friends, also discouraged Paul from going (v. 31).

There was such confusion in the theater, with people shouting different things, that most of those present didn't know the purpose of the gathering (v. 32). The Jews pulled Alexander<sup>22</sup> out of the crowd for him to address the crowd. Maybe some of the Jews wanted someone to clarify that not all Jews were to be identified with Paul and his companions.

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15 This is the first mention of Timothy since he came to Corinth (Acts 18:5).

16 This may be the same Erastus that was the treasurer of Corinth (Rom. 16:23), but we don't know (cf. 2 Tim. 4:20).

17 Timothy would go from Macedonia to Corinth. Paul expected the letter to arrive before Timothy got to Corinth.

18 "This was a celebrated goddess of the pagan, and one of the twelve superior deities. In the heavens she was Luna, or Meui (the moon); on earth, Diana; and in hell, Hecate. She was sometimes represented with a crescent on her head, a bow in her hand, and dressed in a hunting habit; at other times with a triple face, and with instruments of torture. She was commonly regarded as the goddess of hunting. She was also worshipped under the various names of Lucina, Proserpine, Trivia, etc. She was also represented with a great number of breasts, to denote her as being the fountain of blessings, or as distributing her benefits to each in their proper station. She was worshipped in Egypt, Athens, Cilicia, and among pagan nations generally; but the most celebrated place of her worship was Ephesus, a city especially dedicated to her" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

19 A large amphitheater that would seat some 25,000.

20 Gaius was a common name. This Gaius was from Macedonia. We cannot identify him with certainty with other references to Gaius (Acts 20:4; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14; 3 John 1). We do know that he was a travel companion of Paul. That association with Paul was, no doubt, the reason for being taken into the theater.

21 "The Aristarchus of this verse may be the Aristarchus of 20:4, for that Aristarchus was of Thessalonica, a city of Macedonia. He traveled with Paul to Rome (27:2) and was associated with him during his imprisonment there (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24)" (Johnny Stringer, *Truth Commentaries, Acts 404*).

22 We don't know who this Alexander is. Any effort to identify him is pure guess.

Since he was a Jew, the crowd reacted by shouting for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (v. 34).

*The city clerk appeased the people and dismissed the assembly* (vv. 35-41). The town clerk made four points to the crowd. First, he reasoned saying that no one could deny that Ephesus was the temple guardian of the great goddess Diana. Since that was true, the crowd should settle down and not do anything rash (vv. 35-36). The riot was *useless* "because no one was about to forget the fact that Ephesus was the guardian of the temple of Artemis."<sup>23</sup> Secondly, the town clerk pointed out the riot was *not justified* since these men had not done any wrong (v. 37). The two men that were pulled into the theater were not guilty of any crimes. His third point was that if Demetrius and the other craftsmen had a legitimate charge against these men, let them settle that in the proper court (vv. 38-39). His final point was that they were in danger of being in trouble with the Roman government for having an unlawful assembly (v. 40).

With that, the crowd was dismissed.

## Questions

1. In what sense were the twelve called "disciples"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does it mean that these twelve didn't know whether there was a Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the difference in John's baptism and the baptism of the Great Commission? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do all Christians today receive the Holy Spirit like the twelve? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How effective was Paul's work for two years in the school of Tyrannus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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23 Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 696.



6. What made the miracles of Paul (vv. 11-12) "unusual"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What caused the people to see that Paul's teaching was true (v. 17)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What progress reports are found in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Who stirred up the riot and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What four points did the town clerk make? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Acts 20**

# Lesson 19

## In Macedonia and Greece, Worship at Troas, Visit with the Ephesian Elders

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### Outline

#### I. Paul's Second Visit to Macedonia and Greece (vv. 1-6)

- A. *Encouraged the brethren in Macedonia (vv. 1-2a)*
- B. *Spent three months in Greece (vv. 2a-3a)*
- C. *Traveled back through Macedonia and sailed to Troas (vv. 3b-6)*

#### II. Lord's Day Meeting at Troas (vv. 7-12)

- A. *Observed the Lord's Supper (v. 7a)*
- B. *Paul preached (v. 7b)*
- C. *Eutychus fell out of the window (vv. 8-12)*

#### III. From Troas to Miletus (vv. 13-16)

#### IV. Paul Talked with the Ephesian Elders at Miletus (vv. 17-38)

- A. *Reviewed his past work (vv. 17-21, 26-27, 33-35)*
  - 1. Served the Lord with humility, tears and trials (vv. 17-19)
  - 2. Kept nothing back, but taught you the whole counsel of God (vv. 20-21; 26-27)
  - 3. Provided for myself by working and taught you to support the weak (vv. 33-35)
- B. *Anticipated the trip to Jerusalem (vv. 22-25)*
  - 1. Chains and tribulation await me (vv. 22-23)
  - 2. Yet, I plan to preach the gospel (v. 24)
  - 3. You will see me no more (v. 25)
- C. *A Charge and warning to the elders (vv. 28-32)*
  - 1. Take heed to and shepherd the flock (v. 28)
  - 2. Apostasy will come from among you (vv. 29-31)
  - 3. Commend you to the word of God's grace (v. 32)
- D. *Paul departed (vv. 36-38)*

## Key Verses that Summarizes the Chapter

### Acts 20:7, 17

*7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.*

*17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.*

The third missionary journey continues (18-21), with the previous chapter being devoted to the work being done in Ephesus. In this chapter Paul leaves Ephesus then goes into Macedonia and Greece. He begins his return trip back through Macedonia and comes to Troas where he worships with disciples. He travels to Miletus to meet with the elders of the church at Ephesus

### Paul's Second Visit to Macedonia and Greece (vv. 1-6)

*Encouraged the brethren in Macedonia* (vv. 1-2a). Paul left Ephesus and headed toward Macedonia. There is more information about this part of his trip in 2 Corinthians. Paul went to Troas and waited on Titus to hear a report of how the 1 Corinthian letter was received (2 Cor. 1:8; 2:12-13). Titus was delayed, so Paul went to Macedonia – most likely Philippi (2 Cor. 2:13). Titus met Paul there and gave a report of the reaction to the first letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:5-7). Paul sent the second letter to Corinth by Titus (2 Cor. 8:16-24).

The work done in Ephesus was summarized in the phrase “encouraged them with many words” (v. 2).

*Spent three months in Greece* (vv. 2b-3a). From Macedonia Paul went to Greece (Achaia). This would include Athens and Corinth. Paul spent three months in the region. It was during this time that Paul wrote the book of Romans (cf. Rom. 15:25-27).

*Traveled back through Macedonia and sailed to Troas* (vv. 3b-6). Paul's plan was to sail to Syria but when he learned of a plot against him, he decided to go through Macedonia (v. 3b). Those traveling with Paul were “Sopater of Berea<sup>1</sup>...Aristarchus<sup>2</sup> and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius<sup>3</sup> of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus<sup>4</sup> and Trophimus<sup>5</sup> of Asia” (v. 4). These were messengers chosen by the churches sending money to Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:3-4). These men went ahead of Paul to Troas.

1 Some think he is the same as Sosipater (Rom. 16:32).

2 He was one of two taken into the Theater at Ephesus (Acts 19:29). He later goes to Rome with Paul (Acts 27:2). See also Col. 4:10; Philemon 23.

3 This is not the same as Gaius in Acts 19:29 for he was of Macedonia.

4 He was sent with the letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21). He carried the letter to the Colossians along with Onesimus (Col. 4:7-9). See also 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12.

5 Acts 21:26; 2 Tim. 4:20.

Luke joined Paul again for he used the term “we” in telling of Paul’s travels (v. 6).<sup>6</sup> They sailed from Philippi and in five days joined the others in Troas. They stayed seven days waiting on the Lord’s Day (vv. 6-7).<sup>7</sup>

## Lord’s Day Meeting at Troas (vv. 7-12)

*Observed the Lord’s Supper* (v. 7a). The disciples came together on the first day of the week to observe the Lord’s Supper.

- 1. The significance of the first day of the week.** Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of week (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:9). Jesus appeared to his disciples on that same day (John 20:29, 26). The first gospel sermon was preached on the first day of the week (Acts 2)<sup>8</sup>. The church was established on the first day of the week (Acts 2:47). The first day of the week is called the “Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10).
- 2. “Break bread” refers to the Lord’s Supper.** Breaking bread can refer to a common meal (Acts 2:46; 20:11). It is also used in reference to the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-24). Since this text is in a worship assembly, it refers to the Lord’s Supper. Christians are to come together for the purpose of eating the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:20). There isn’t to be a common meal in the assembly (1 Cor. 11:22, 34).
- 3. This is the only passage that tells us the day of observance of the Lord’s Supper.** Other passages give the command to observe it, but when that is to be done is only given here. Interesting is the fact that this is not a command, but an approved example.<sup>9</sup> No other day is authorized.
- 4. This passage infers that the Lord’s Supper is to be observed every first day of the week.** We know that Christians regularly met on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Just as the command to remember the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8) meant every time the Sabbath occurs, likewise, this example tells us that we are to observe the Lord’s Supper every time the first day occurs.
- 5. Was Jewish time or Roman time being used by Luke?** A question frequently raised about this passage is whether Luke is using Jewish time (sunset to sunset) or Roman time (midnight to midnight). The argument some make is that if Jewish time was used, the observance would have been on Saturday night. Roman time is being used by Luke because Troas was in a Gentile region under Roman influence. Furthermore, Paul departed at daybreak (v.11) which was the next day (v. 7). If Jewish time was being used, he would be departing the same day!

6 He last included himself in the travels to Philippi (Acts 16:10, 40) on the second journey. Thus, he must have remained there until Paul passes through there on this journey.

7 The fact that they stayed so long (waiting to assemble with the saints on the Lord’s Day) says something about the importance of worship. Contrast that to today when Christians don’t plan on where to be on the Lord’s Day when traveling, or, they don’t have time to stop on the road for worship.

8 The day of Pentecost fell on the first day of the week (see lesson 2).

9 God’s approval is seen in the miracle of raising Eutychus from the dead.

*Paul preached* (v. 7b). Paul preached to these disciples to strengthen and edify them (cf. Rom. 10:17; Acts 20:32). His sermon lasted a while. This was not a short pep talk, but rather ample instruction and admonition for two reasons. First, he intended to leave the next day (v. 7). Second, he did not expect to see these disciples again (cf. v. 38). “Church meetings were not regulated by the clock in those days, and the opportunity of listening to Paul was not one to be cut short; what did it matter if he went on conversing with them until midnight?”<sup>10</sup>

*Eutychus fell out of the window* (vv. 8-12). The meeting took place in an upper room (3<sup>rd</sup> story) at evening (vv. 7-9). A young man, named Eutychus, was sitting in a window and fell into a deep sleep and fell to the ground. It killed him for he was taken up “dead” (v.9). Paul raised him from the dead (vv. 10, 12). This showed God’s approval of the meeting and Paul’s preaching. After that, Paul ate and visited with the brethren till daylight and then departed.

### **From Troas to Miletus (vv. 13-16)**

These four verses describe Paul’s journey from Troas to Miletus. Luke and others boarded a ship and sailed to Assos. Paul walked to Assos, boarded the ship there and sailed to Mitylene. They sailed from there to the coast opposite of Chios. Then they sailed to Samos, stayed at Trogyllium and finally arrived at Miletus. He decided not to sail to Ephesus lest he spend too much time there and not make it to Jerusalem by Pentecost.

### **Paul Talked with the Ephesian Elders at Miletus (vv. 17-38)**

Paul’s message to the elders<sup>11</sup> of the Ephesian church was one of encouragement and warning. It is the only recorded speech made to Christians.

*Reviewed his past work* (vv. 17-21, 26-27, 33-35). Paul began by reviewing his manner of living while working with the church at Ephesus. He had lead a consistent life. He served the Lord with humility, tears and trials at the hand of the Jews (vv. 17-19).

He kept nothing back, but taught the whole counsel of God, both publicly and privately (vv. 20-21, 26-27). He boldly taught repentance toward God and faith in Christ (v. 21).<sup>12</sup> He could say that he was innocent of the blood of all men because he declared the whole counsel of God (v. 26-27).

He reminded the elders that he provided for himself by working with his hands and taught them to support the weak (vv. 33-35).<sup>13</sup>

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10 F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, 408.

11 There are three terms in the Greek that refer to elders (each translated with two different words – making six in English). All three are used in this chapter. They are called elders (v. 17, same word for presbyter), overseers (v. 28, same word for Bishop), and shepherds (v. 28, same word for pastors).

12 Repentance here precedes faith. Those under the influence of Jewish thinking who believed in God, but rejected Christ, were to repent toward God for not accepting the Christ and turn and believe in Christ.

13 The quote from the Lord, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” is only recorded here. It is not found in the gospels.

*Anticipation of trip to Jerusalem* (vv. 22-25). Turning from the past, he focused on the present and the future. Concerning himself, Paul had plans to go to Jerusalem. There was some uncertainty about going to Jerusalem (v. 22) since he did not know what would happen to him there. He knew that he would face chains and tribulation yet Paul was determined to go anyway (v. 24). Concerning the Ephesians, Paul said they would see his face no more (v. 25).

*A charge and warning to the elders* (vv. 28-32). He urged the elders to take heed to themselves and to the flock and feed them what they need (v. 28). "Vigilance is necessary to guard their own faith from temptations and trials of the devil. Having established their own faith, they must watch as guardians of the flock."<sup>14</sup> The sober responsibility that elders have is seen in two reminders that Paul gave them: (1) The Holy Spirit had made them overseers (v. 28).<sup>15</sup> (2) They were overseeing the church belonging to God (being purchased by the blood of Christ, v. 28).

One reason they needed to take careful heed to the flock was that apostasy would come (vv. 29-30). Soon, from among them erroneous ideas would be taught and disciples would be drawn away (v. 30). The elders were told to watch in view of the warning (v. 31). They were urged to remember multiple warnings he had given them in the three years he was there. Paul commended them to the word of God's grace (the gospel) because he was able to build them up and insulate them against apostasy (v. 32).

*Paul departs* (vv. 36-38). Paul was hurrying to get to Jerusalem (v. 16). When he was through talking with the elders, he knelt down and prayed with them (v. 36). They all wept and embraced Paul (v. 37). They were upset most by the fact that Paul said they would see him no more (v. 35, 38). Then, they accompanied him to his ship (v. 38).

## Questions

1. What books of the Bible were written during this section of the third journey? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What role did Paul's travel companions play in his travels? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is the significance of the first day of the week? \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Harkrider, *Acts*, 89.

<sup>15</sup> The Holy Spirit made them overseers by revealing the qualifications for elders (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9).

4. How do we know that "break bread" refers to the Lord's Supper? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How do we know that this passage infers that the Lord's Supper is to be observed every first day of the week? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Was Luke using Roman time or Jewish time? What difference would it make? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why did Paul preach so long? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Paul know about his trip to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What did Paul not know about his trip to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What warning did Paul give the Ephesian elders? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Acts 21****Lesson 20**  
**Ending the Third Journey and**  
**Paul Arrested in Jerusalem****Outline****I. From Miletus To Jerusalem (vv. 1-17)**

- A. *Sailed from Miletus to Tyre (vv. 1-3)*
- B. *Stayed seven days in Tyre with the disciples (vv. 4-6)*
- C. *Came to Caesarea and stayed with Philip (vv. 7-9)*
- D. *The prophet Agabus foretold of Paul's arrest and imprisonment (vv. 10-11)*
- E. *Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem anyway (vv. 12-14)*
- F. *Paul went to Jerusalem (vv. 15-17)*

**II. Paul Arrested in Jerusalem (vv. 18-40)**

- A. *Paul went before James and the elders (vv. 18-25)*
  - 1. Paul reported his work among the Gentiles (vv. 18-19)
  - 2. James and the elders warned about the results of false rumors about him (vv. 20-22)
  - 3. James and the elders suggested that Paul take four men and observe Jewish customs to prove the rumor false (vv. 23-24)
  - 4. James and the elders restated that the law should not be bound on the Gentiles (v. 25)
- B. *Paul went into the temple (v. 26).*
- C. *The uproar (vv. 27-32)*
  - 1. Paul accused of teaching against the law and taking Gentiles into the temple (vv. 27-29).
  - 2. Paul dragged out of the temple and beaten by a mob (vv. 30-32).
- D. *Paul's arrest (vv. 33-36).*
- E. *Paul given permission to speak (vv. 37-40)*

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 21:11**

*When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"*

This lesson ends the third missionary journey (18-21). In the previous lesson, Paul remains in Miletus, and this chapter, chapter 21, takes him from Miletus to Jerusalem. When he arrives there, his third journey is over. He is arrested in Jerusalem, thus a new segment of his life's story begins.

### **From Miletus to Jerusalem (vv. 1-17)**

*Sailed from Miletus to Tyre* (vv. 1-3). Paul and his companions sailed from Miletus to Cos<sup>1</sup> and stayed one night. The next day they traveled to Rhodes<sup>2</sup> and then on to Patara<sup>3</sup>. There they found a ship headed to Phoenicia. They boarded it, sailed passed Cyprus and landed at Tyre where the ship unloaded its cargo.

*Stayed seven days in Tyre with the disciples* (vv. 4-6). Arriving at Tyre they found disciples there and stayed for seven days. The Christians urged Paul "through the Spirit" not to go to Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> When Paul and his company departed, the brethren (including women and children) followed them to the ship where they prayed and said their farewell before parting ways.

*Came to Caesarea and stayed with Philip* (vv. 7-9). From Tyre they sailed to Ptolemais<sup>5</sup> and stayed one day. From there they came to Caesarea where they found Philip the evangelist<sup>6</sup> and stayed with him. After leaving the Eunuch, Philip came to Caesarea and apparently had been there for twenty years (Acts 8:40). He is here identified as one of the seven (cf. Acts 6:1-5). Philip had four virgin daughters that prophesied (v. 9).<sup>7</sup>

*The prophet Agabus foretold of Paul's arrest and imprisonment* (vv. 10-11). While staying in Caesarea a prophet named Agabus<sup>8</sup> came from Judea. He took Paul's belt and gave a vivid demonstration of what Paul would face. Using the belt he bound his own hands and feet and said the same would be done to the man who owns the belt. He said that the Jews who bind him will turn him over to the Gentiles.

*Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem anyway* (vv. 12-14). Understanding what Agabus foretold, Paul's companions and the brethren from Caesarea pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Paul responded, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?"

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1 A small island about 40 miles south of Miletus.

2 A large island in the Aegean Sea. It was about 42 miles long by 15 miles wide.

3 The main seaport of Lycia.

4 This simply means that they had learned what Paul would face at Jerusalem by those inspired by Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 20:22-23). Because of that, they urged Paul not to go. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit gave direction for Paul not to go and he disobeyed. On another occasion he changed his travel plans in obedience to the Spirit (Acts 16:6-8).

5 Some 25-30 miles south of Tyre.

6 His work as an evangelist is seen in his preaching in Samaria (Acts 8:5-12) and to the Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).

7 This speaks volumes about Philip as a father. His daughters were taught and trained to be morally pure. They were led to be faithful and be used in the kingdom.

8 Most likely the same man in Acts 11:28.

(v. 13). Paul was determined to go anyway – in spite of the danger. Their emotional pleas were crushing his heart. They were “weakening Paul’s determination to go on with his duty.”<sup>9</sup> He was wanting to do the right thing and they were begging him not to. Paul displayed a spirit of total commitment and complete sacrifice. When the brethren saw his determination, they stopped their weeping and begging and said, “The will of the Lord be done” (v. 14).

*Paul went to Jerusalem* (vv. 15-17). Paul and his travel companions packed up and went to Jerusalem along with some of the brethren from Caesarea. They stayed with Mnason who was an early disciple from Cyprus. The brethren in Jerusalem received Paul with gladness when he arrived.

### **Paul Arrested in Jerusalem (vv. 18-40)**

*Paul went before James and the elders* (vv. 18-25).<sup>10</sup> The day after arriving in Jerusalem Paul met with James<sup>11</sup> and all the elders.<sup>12</sup> Paul reported about his work among the Gentiles (vv. 18-19). This caused the elders to praise God for the good that was done (v. 20).

The elders warned Paul about the thousands of Jews (recently converted) who were zealous for the law. These Jews had been misinformed about what Paul believed and taught. They had been told Paul taught that all Jews (among the Gentiles) were to forsake Moses, not circumcise their children, and not keep the customs of the Jews (vv. 20-21). The elders said that these Jewish brethren will surely meet for they will hear that Paul was in Jerusalem (v. 22).

They suggested Paul go with four men, who had taken a vow,<sup>13</sup> be purified with them, pay the expenses when they go and shave their heads (vv. 23-24). The elders may have gotten the idea from an earlier occasion where Paul took a vow (Acts 18:18). By going into the temple and paying the expense Paul would show two things: the rumor was wrong and he kept the customs of the Jews (v. 24).<sup>14</sup>

James and the elders restated the law should not be bound on Gentiles (25). They made it clear that their advice was not against the conclusions of the Jerusalem meeting (Acts 15). Their position had not changed.

When the Law ceased, the Jews still kept many of the customs. They still could rightfully abstain from some foods (Rom. 14) and could still circumcise their children (Gal. 5:6). Paul taught that the Law of Moses ended (Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:24-25) and was no longer binding. The Jews were separated from it (Rom. 7:1-4) and no one could be saved by obeying the law (Rom. 3:20). This did not mean that one could not circumcise their child. In fact, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3). He had never taught that one could not keep the customs of the Jews.

9 A. T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press.

10 It may have been in this meeting that Paul delivered the funds he was delivering from the Gentile churches to help needy saints (Rom. 15:25-31).

11 Probably the Lord’s brother.

12 To mention James and all the elders does not suggest that he was not an elder as some suggest.

13 Most likely this was the Nazarite vow (Numbers 6).

14 “Keep the law” does not mean Paul kept the Law of Moses as if he were binding. Rather, he kept the customs of the Jews.

*Paul went into the temple* (v. 26). Paul followed their advice. He went into the temple to announce his intentions and the expiration of the days of purification to the priests. He didn't just tell his brethren what he believed, he showed his belief.<sup>15</sup>

*The uproar* (vv. 27-32). When the seven days of purification were almost ended, Jews from Asia (not the Jewish converts – vv. 20-21) stirred up the crowd. They made unfounded charges against Paul (vv. 28-29) saying he teaches against the people, against the Law, against the temple and besides all that, he brought a Gentile into the temple. This charge (about a Gentile) was based upon assumption. They had seen Paul with Trophimus and assumed he had brought him into the Temple (v. 29).

The whole city was in an uproar. They captured Paul and wanted to kill him. The news of the uproar came to the commander (identified later as Claudias Lysias, Acts 23:26; 24:7, 22) who took his men and put a stop to them beating Paul (v. 32).

*Paul's arrest* (vv. 33-36). The commander bound Paul with two chains, asking who Paul was and what he had done (v. 33).<sup>16</sup> He got little or no help from the crowd since they were shouting different things (v. 34). So, Claudias Lysias had his soldiers take him (due to the violent mob) into the barracks<sup>17</sup>. As they carried him away, the mob shouted, "Away with him" (v. 36). Paul was now being held as a prisoner while determination was made about what he had done. He would remain a prisoner for the rest of the book.

*Paul given permission to speak* (vv. 37-40). As Paul was being led into the barracks he asked the commander, "May I speak to you?" The commander was curious about his ability to speak Greek (v. 37). Lysias immediately asked if Paul was the Egyptian revolutionary that lead a Jewish rebellion against the Roman Rulers (v. 38).

Some years before an Egyptian lead his followers (4,000 according to Lysias) into the wilderness. He had convinced them into believing that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down at his command much like Jericho's walls fell in Joshua's day. His plan was to then overpower the Roman rulers in Jerusalem. It was a disaster. However, this ring leader escaped. The commander seemed to be assuming that Paul was that leader, perhaps because he spoke Greek and the Egyptian Jews spoke Greek.

Paul pointed out that to the contrary he was from Tarsus, in Cilicia (v. 39). Paul asked for permission to address the crowd. The commander permitted him to speak. When the crowd quieted down, he began speaking in the Hebrew<sup>18</sup> language (v.40). What he said, will be found in the next chapter.

## Questions

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- 15 This is a case of "putting your money were you mouth is" like Jeremiah did in buying the field (Jer. 32) and Ezra refusing an escort (Ezra 8:22).
  - 16 He seems to be searching for the truth about Paul. He is later willing to give up his assumptions about Paul (cf. vv. 37-39). He gave permission for Paul to speak for himself (v. 40).
  - 17 "The castle of Antonia, where the guard was kept" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft).
  - 18 By addressing them in the Hebrew tongue, he captured their attention (cf. 22:2).

1. Who is Philip? Where have we seen him before? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What do we learn about Philip when we see he had four virgin daughters that prophesied? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did Agabus say and how did he demonstrate it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How were Paul's companions and other brethren breaking Paul's heart? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the misunderstanding that some new Jewish converts had about Paul? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How did Paul show the misunderstanding was not true? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What had Paul actually taught about the Law of Moses? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the point the elders were making in verse 25? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How did the mob conclude that Paul had taken a Gentile into the temple? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Who did Claudias Lysias think Paul might be? Why did he think that? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 22****Lesson 21  
Paul's Defense****Outline****I. Paul's Speech before the People** (vv. 1-21)

- A. *Life before my conversion* (vv. 1-5)
  1. Brought up in the strictness of the Jewish religion (vv. 1-3)
  2. Persecuted Christians (vv. 4-5)
- B. *My conversion* (vv. 6-16)
  1. The Lord appeared to me on the road to Damascus (vv. 6-11)
  2. Ananias came and preached to me (vv. 12-16)
    - a. He restored my sight (vv. 12-13)
    - b. He told me that God chose me to be a witness to the Gentiles (vv. 14-15)
    - c. He commanded that I be baptized (v. 16)
- C. *I was called to preach to the Gentiles* (vv. 17-21)
  1. The Lord told me to get out of Jerusalem quickly (vv. 17-18)
  2. I said that they know how I persecuted Christians (vv. 19-20)
  3. The Lord said, "Depart, for I will send you to the Gentiles" (v. 21)

**II. The Immediate Effects of Paul's Speech** (vv. 22-30)

- A. *Mob cried, "Away with him..."* (vv. 22-23)
  1. Tore their clothes
  2. Threw dust in the air
- B. *Soldiers attempted to scourge him* (vv. 24-29)
  1. Commander ordered scourging to know why the mob cried (v. 24)
  2. Paul asked if it were lawful to scourge a Roman being uncondemned (v. 25)
  3. When they learned that he was a Roman, they withheld scourging (vv. 26-29)
- C. *Paul brought before the Sanhedrin* (v. 30)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 22:15***For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.*

At the close of chapter 21 Paul is arrested. As he is being led into the barracks, Paul is given permission to speak. This chapter records that defense and the reaction to it.

## Paul's Speech before the People (vv. 1-21)

Paul's defense (v. 1) was not merely a rebuttal of the false charges, but an effort to touch the hearts of his audience because of love for their souls. As he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, the crowd quietened and listened to Paul. When he used the language of Palestinian Jews, he gained a small degree of connection with his audience.

This address covers three points: His life before his conversion, his conversion and his call to the Gentiles.

1. *Life before my conversion* (vv. 1-5). The apostle established two things. First, he was brought up in the strictness of the Jewish religion (vv. 1-3). Paul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but he was raised in Jerusalem (v. 3). He was a student of Gamaliel (v. 3).<sup>1</sup> "Paul was thus nourished in Pharisaic Judaism as interpreted by Gamaliel, one of the lights of Judaism...He was one of the seven Rabbis to whom the Jews gave the highest title [Rabban] (our Rabbi)."<sup>2</sup> Paul was as strict in the Jewish religion and as zealous as anyone in the crowd who was listening (v. 3). Second, he persecuted Christians (vv. 4-5). During this time he persecuted the Way<sup>3</sup> to the point of death. Stephen was one he helped put to death, but there were more. He sought to capture believers in Christ and put them in prison (v. 4). The high priest and the council (the Sanhedrin) could verify that he had been on a mission (with their permission) to find Christians in Damascus and bring them to Jerusalem to punish them (v. 5).

Paul was not some renegade Jew who never really was true to his religion. To the contrary he was as zealous as any of them – more in fact.

2. *My conversion* (vv. 6-16).<sup>4</sup> What made Paul change? Here, as in the previous section, he made two points: First, the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus (vv. 6-11).<sup>5</sup> At about noon a bright light (brighter than the noon sun, 26:13) shone around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (v. 7).<sup>6</sup> He asked, "Who are You, Lord?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are

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1 "Paul mentions his having been instructed in this manner in order to show that he was entitled to the full privileges of a Jew, and that he had had every opportunity to become fully acquainted with the nature of the Law" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

2 A. T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

3 Luke uses the terms "the Way" to designate Christianity, the way of the Lord (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

4 The record of Paul's conversion is found in Acts 9, 22, 26.

5 It was essential that Paul see the resurrected Lord to be qualified to be an apostle (Acts 1:22).

6 What Saul had done to Christians was done to the Lord. Thus, how we treat fellow Christians or the church as a whole is how we are treating our Lord – whether good or bad.



persecuting” (v. 8). Saul’s travel companions were afraid when they saw the light, but didn’t hear (understand) the voice (v. 9).<sup>7</sup> Saul asked what he should do. The Lord told him to go into the city (Damascus) and he would be told what he should do (v. 10, cf. 9:6). Since the light had blinded him, his companions led him into the city (v. 11). Second, Ananias came and preached to him (vv. 12-16). The preacher, Ananias, was identified as a man “who honored the Law of Moses and was highly regarded by the Jews in Damascus.”<sup>8</sup> He miraculously restored Saul’s sight (vv. 12-13) which gave proof that what he taught Saul was from God (cf. Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3-4). Ananias explained that the Lord had chosen him to be a witness to all men (including Gentiles) of all he had seen and heard (vv. 14-15). The purpose for the Lord appearing to Paul was not to save him, but to call him to preach among the Gentiles.

Ananias asked, “Why are you waiting?” (v. 16).<sup>9</sup> He commanded him to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins (v. 16). We learn here that baptism is for the purpose of washing away sins (cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). Why was baptism the only condition mentioned here? Evidence that he believed was seen in the fact that he went into the city at the Lord’s command. Evidence that he repented was seen in that he had not eaten in three days (Acts 9:9). It is obvious that Saul was not saved on the road as many of our religious friends contend. If he was saved on the road (when the Lord appeared to him) he was still in his sins according to verse 16.<sup>10</sup>

What does calling on the name of the Lord mean? Three passages help us to understand.

- Acts 2. Peter quoted Joel saying that whoever calls on the name of the Lord can be saved (Acts 2:21). At the end of the chapter, 3,000 souls were saved (v. 41, 47). What were they told to do between those verses? They were told to believe (v. 36), repent (v. 38), and be baptized (v. 38). That is what they did (v. 41), and they were saved (v. 47). Thus, when they believed, repented and were baptized, they were calling on the name of the Lord.
- Roman 10:13, 16. In these verses Paul said that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord could be saved (v. 13). But, when he pointed out they didn’t do that, he said they didn’t obey (v. 16). Thus, obedience (v. 16) is synonymous with calling (v. 13).
- Acts 22:16. When Saul would arise and be baptized, then he would be calling on the name of the Lord.

3. *I was called to preach to the Gentiles* (vv. 17-21). When Paul returned to Jerusalem<sup>11</sup>, the Lord spoke to him in a vision telling him to get out of Jerusalem quickly for the Jews would

7 Acts 9:7 says they heard the voice. This verse says they didn’t hear. These are not contradictory. In Acts 9 they heard in the sense that they heard a voice talking, but here they didn’t hear in the sense they didn’t understand.

8 Johnny Stringer, *Acts*, Truth Commentaries, 466.

9 Remember, that Ananias found Saul praying (Acts 9:11). Thus, as long as he delayed his obedience (even though he was praying), he was waiting (putting off his calling on the name of the Lord).

10 See lesson 9 for more details about whether Saul was saved on the road.

11 This is likely the trip mentioned in Gal. 1:18-24 which was three years after his conversion. He spent fifteen days there (cf. Acts 9:26-30).

not receive his testimony (vv. 17-18). Paul contended that they would accept him since they all knew how sincere he was and still is, since he once persecuted Christians (vv. 19-20).

However, the Lord said, “Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles” (v. 21). In spite of Paul’s reasoning, the Lord told him to leave and go to the Gentiles. Paul made it clear that he went to the Gentiles because of this divine call, even though he wanted to stay and work among Jews in Jerusalem. This was as far as the crowd let Paul go in his defense.

### The Immediate Effects of Paul’s Speech (vv. 22-30)

*The mob cried, “Away with him...”* (vv. 22-23). They listened until “this word” (his mentioning the Gentiles). They began shouting, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for his is not fit to live!” (v. 22). They wanted to kill him. They tore off their clothes and threw dust in the air (v. 23). It is hard to know exactly what these two actions meant. To be sure it was “a lively picture of the uncontrolled excitement by the mob in their spasm of wild rage.”<sup>12</sup> It might be some action in preparation to or symbolic of stoning Paul – throwing dust toward him as they would throw stones if they had them.

*Soldiers attempted to scourge him* (vv. 24-29). The commander (Claudias Lysias) commanded that Paul be scourged<sup>13</sup> to get him to confess what he had done to stir this crowd (v. 24). As they prepared him for scourging, Paul asked if it were lawful to scourge a Roman who had not been through a trial and found guilty (v.25). The centurion in charge advised the commander to be careful for this man is a Roman (v. 26). So the commander asked Paul if he was a Roman. Paul said, “Yes” (v. 27). Claudias Lysias said he paid a large sum to become a Roman citizen (probably referring to a bribe). Or, he may be asking how did Paul (who wouldn’t be able to pay the large sum Lysias did) become a citizen. Paul neither paid a small or large price. He was born a Roman citizen (v. 28). Thus, he stood as a more honorable Roman citizen than the commander himself! With this new information, they not only stopped before they scourged him, but were afraid because they were about to beat a Roman citizen (v. 29).

*Paul brought before the Sanhedrin* (v. 30). Still wanting to know what Paul might have done wrong, Paul was brought before the Sanhedrin council (the Supreme Court among the Jews).

### Questions

1. What did speaking in the Hebrew language accomplish for Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>12</sup> A. T. Robertson, *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> “The Roman scourge (Latin, *flagellum*) was a fearful instrument of torture, consisting of three to nine strands of leather thongs, weighted with rough pieces of metal and attached to a stout wooden handle. The person to be scourged was stripped to the waist, and then tied with leather thongs, either in a stooping position over a short post or suspended by the hands above the ground. Men were known to have their eyeballs gouged out by the metal ends of the thongs, or to have their abdomens torn open, during the brutal lashings. Tacitus tells us that in such beatings seven out of ten men died, literally beaten to death; the other three were carried out in in stretcher, and most remained crippled for life” (Gareth L. Reese, *Acts*, 810).

2. What three points did Paul make in his defense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why would Paul make a point about persecuting Christians (vv. 4-5)? What would that mean to the crowd? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What made Paul change? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How can you show that Saul was not saved on the road to Damascus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Is there a contradiction in whether those with Saul heard the voice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord? How would you prove your answer?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What was Paul's reaction to the Lord telling him to leave Jerusalem quickly? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the point that really set the crowd off when they heard his defense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Why were they going to scourge Paul? Why didn't they do that? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Acts 23****Lesson 22  
Paul Before the Sanhedrim and  
Delivered to Caesarea****Outline****I. Paul before the Sanhedrin (vv. 1-10)**

- A. *Paul said that he had lived in good conscience (v. 1)*
- B. *Ananias commanded that Paul be struck on the mouth (vv. 2-5)*
  - 1. Paul rebuked Ananias (v. 3)
  - 2. The people rebuked Paul for reviling the High Priest (vv. 4-5)
- C. *Paul stated that he was condemned because of the hope of the resurrection from the dead (vv. 6-10)*
  - 1. He did this knowing that the group was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees (v. 6)
  - 2. Caused dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees (vv. 7-10a)
    - a. Because of their difference on the resurrection (v. 8)
    - b. Pharisees cried out that they found no fault in Paul (v. 9)
  - 3. Commander had Paul taken to the Barracks lest he be killed (v. 10b)

**II. The Lord Appeared to Paul At Night (v. 11)**

- A. *Lord told Paul to be of good cheer (v. 11)*
- B. *Lord told Paul that he would testify of him in Rome (v. 11)*

**III. A Plot Against Paul Revealed (vv. 12-22)**

- A. *Forty (plus) Jews took an oath to kill Paul (vv. 12-15)*
  - 1. Oath was not to eat or drink anything until they killed Paul (vv. 12-13)
  - 2. Plotted with the chief priest and elders to have Paul brought to the council so they could kill him on the way (vv. 14-15)
- B. *Paul's nephew spoiled the plot (vv. 16-22)*
  - 1. Informed Paul (v. 16)
  - 2. Paul sent him to the Commander (vv. 17-22)

**IV. Paul Delivered to Caesarea (vv. 23-25)**

- A. *The commander prepared protection to bring Paul to Felix (vv. 23-24)*
- B. *A letter from Lysias to Felix was sent along with Paul (vv. 25-30)*
- C. *Paul delivered to Felix (vv. 31-35)*

## Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter

### Acts 23:6

But when Paul perceived that 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; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

Paul the prisoner, as he is called (v. 18), is taken before the Sanhedrin council for a hearing that didn't last as long as they must have anticipated. The meeting ends in disruption and confusion. The hatred against Paul is so great that some forty people devised a plot to kill him in an ambush, which failed. Claudias Lysias rushes him to Caerea to Felix the governor.

### Paul before the Sanhedrin (vv. 1-10)

*Paul said that he had lived in good conscience* (v. 1). Paul boldly told the council that he had lived in all good conscience before God. He had always been sincere and always done what he thought to be right (cf. Acts 24:16; 26:9-10).<sup>1</sup> It took courage to make such a bold claim of innocence before the council. To fellow believers this was an honorable statement. But to the council it was an insult to such a "revered" body.

A good conscience is essential (Rom. 14:23), however, it must be educated by the word (Rom. 2:15). The conscience is only as good as the knowledge we have.

*Ananias commanded that Paul be struck on the mouth* (vv. 2-5). Ananias, the high priest, commanded that Paul be struck on the mouth to silence him for making such a claim (v. 2). Such treatment was contrary to the law (Lev. 19:15, 35). Yet, Ananias and the rest were going to judge Paul "according to the law" (v. 3). Thus, Paul responded by saying, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!" – a charge of hypocrisy (v. 3). That took courage to state in the presence of the council.

Paul was rebuked by those who were standing nearby. They asked, "Do you revile God's high priest?" (v. 4). It was a violation of the law to speak disrespectful of the ruler of God's people (Exo. 22:28). So, Paul was wrong to do so.

Paul said he did not know Ananias was the high priest (v. 5). It may be that he didn't see who had given the order to strike him. It may be that he didn't know who was high priest at the time, having been a stranger to the Jewish religion for about 25 years. It could be that he knew who was high priest, but didn't recognize him (he may not have had the high priest's garments on). Whatever the case, Paul is stating that he was wrong to rebuke him and cites Exodus 22:28 as evidence. It obviously took courage to admit he was wrong.

*Paul stated that he was condemned because of the hope of the resurrection from the dead* (vv. 6-10). The heart of the problem with Paul was that he preached the resurrection from the dead (v. 6). The resurrection of Christ was the center of his preaching. If he was raised, then he is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). If he was raised, then all must accept and follow him. Those opposed to Paul did not like the consequences of what he taught.

1 From this we learn that a clear conscience can be wrong. Thus, sincerity is not enough to be saved. It is possible to do wrong and not be bothered.

Paul, knew that part of the council was made up of Pharisees and part of them were Sadducees (v. 6). These two sects stood together against Paul. Paul used their differences to disrupt what would not have been a fair hearing anyway. So he firmly stated he was a Pharisee and was being called in question about the resurrection (v. 6). The Pharisees believed in a resurrection from the dead (as well as believing in angels and spirits). The Sadducees did not believe any of that.

With Paul's statement they are now divided and arguing rather than standing against Paul (vv. 9-10). The Pharisees defended Paul saying he had done no wrong and suggesting that an angel or spirit might have spoken to him. In that case, they didn't want to fight against God (v. 9). This was really a defense of themselves and a stand against the Sadducees rather than a vindication of Paul!<sup>2</sup>

Because the dissension was so great, the commander took Paul by force to protect him and brought him into the barracks (v. 10). This council meeting didn't quite go like they planned.

### **The Lord Appeared to Paul at Night (v. 11)**

*The Lord told Paul to be of good cheer* (v.11). The following night the Lord told Paul to be of good cheer ("take courage" NASB). He, no doubt, had to be discouraged and uncertain about the future. "Paul never needed Jesus more than now."<sup>3</sup>

*The Lord told Paul that he would testify of Him in Rome* (v. 11). The reason Paul should take courage is that his life would be spared so that he would testify of Christ in Rome. Paul should take courage because his life would be spared in order for him to testify of Christ in Rome.<sup>4</sup>

### **A Plot against Paul Revealed (vv. 12-22)**

*Forty (plus) Jews took an oath to kill Paul* (vv. 12-15). "Disappointed at having let Paul slip through their fingers, one group of zealots determined that they would engineer a second opportunity of killing him, and they would not fail this time."<sup>5</sup> The next morning (after the Lord assured Paul) several Jews (more than 40) took an oath saying that they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul (v. 12).<sup>6</sup> The degree of hatred for Paul and his message is seen.

They worked with the chief priests and elders having them call for Paul again (claiming further inquiry was needed) then ambushing him on the way.

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2 This is not uncommon. Quiet often those who stand with you may be with you only because you are against one of their enemies. The sad part is that this happens in the church.

3 A. T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

4 Acts 19:21.

5 F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, 457.

6 You would think that since they failed, surely they starved to death. Not so. "The Mishnah makes provision for relief from such vows as could not be fulfilled 'by reason of constraint' (Nedarim iii. 1, 3)" (F. F. Bruce, *ibid*, 457).

*Paul's nephew spoiled the plot* (vv. 16-22). Paul's sister's son<sup>7</sup> found out about the plot and told Paul (v. 16). Paul asked one of the soldiers (a centurion) to take his nephew to the commander (Claudias Lysias) so the young man could tell him something (v. 17). So, he was taken to the commander and informed him of the plot (vv. 18-21). The commander told Paul's nephew to keep this quiet (v. 22). He then prepared to securely remove Paul from the danger.

Here we get a glimpse of how God's providence works. God had promised to spare Paul's life (v. 11). However, God used the nephew and the commander's scheme to deliver Paul. "Paul did not 'sit with folded hands' but he did what he could to secure his own safety."<sup>8</sup>

### **Paul Delivered to Caesarea (vv. 23-25)**

*The commander prepared protection to bring Paul to Felix* (vv. 23-24). The Commander, Claudias Lysias, commanded two of his centurions to get 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearman and mounts (animals) for Paul to ride at the third hour (9:00 PM).

*A letter from Lysias to Felix was sent along with Paul* (vv. 25-30). The letter he wrote was accurate. However, he omitted the part concerning his plan to scourge Paul but then learned he was a Roman. Lysias painted himself in a favorable light. To be fair, Claudias Lysias did protect Paul from the time he learned of his Roman citizenship.

He stated in the letter that he had found nothing wherein Paul was worthy of death or even imprisonment (v. 29). The only thing mentioned against Paul was that the Jews had questions concerning "their law" (v. 29).

*Paul delivered to Felix* (vv. 31-35). The soldiers escorted Paul from Jerusalem to Antipatris<sup>9</sup> where they stayed the night. Being away from the danger of the possible ambush, the soldiers turned back and the horsemen continued on with Paul whom they delivered along with the letter to Felix (vv. 31-32).

Felix read the letter and asked what province Paul was from. He was told that Paul was from Cilicia (v. 34). Felix said he would hear the matter when Paul's accusers came. He commanded that Paul be kept in Herod's Praetorium (v. 35).<sup>10</sup>

From the standpoint of the Jews, little had been accomplished in stopping Paul.

7 This is the only reference to Paul's family. We know nothing more about his sister or her son.

8 Robert Harkrider, *Acts A Study of Conversions Book II*, 112.

9 This city is about halfway between Jerusalem and Caesarea.

10 "Herod's palace. Built by Herod the Great. Judaea being now a Roman province, the palace of its former kings had become the governor's official residence. It thus appears that Paul was leniently dealt with, and not cast into the common prison" (M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft).



## Questions

1. Why was Paul struck in the mouth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Was Paul wrong to rebuke Ananias? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. List at least three things that Paul did in this chapter that took real courage to do. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What was the heart of the controversy that brought Paul before the council? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did Paul use the differences of the Sadducees and Pharisees? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why did the Pharisees defend Paul? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What assurance was given to Paul (v. 11)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the plan to kill Paul and who was involved? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What do you learn about providence from this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How accurate was the letter Claudias Lysias wrote? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Acts 24****Lesson 23  
Paul Before Felix****Outline****I. The Charge** (vv. 1-9)

- A. *The Accusers* (vv. 1-4)
  1. High priest and elders (v. 1)
  2. Hired an orator – Tertullus (vv. 1-2)
  3. Used flattery (vv. 2-4)
- B. *The Accusations* (vv. 5-7)
  1. Four charges (vv. 5-6)
    - a. He is a plague (v. 5)
    - b. He is a creator of dissension (v. 5)
    - c. He is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (v. 5)
    - d. He tries to profane the temple (v. 6)
  2. We would have given him a fair trial, but Lysias took him by violence (vv. 6-7)
- C. *The Evidence* (vv. 8-9)
  1. Your examination (v. 8)
  2. Jews agreed with Tertullus (v. 9)

**II. The Defense** (vv. 10-21)

- A. *Glad to answer for myself* (v. 10)
- B. *They cannot prove the accusations* (vv. 11-13)
  1. The reason is that I didn't do these things – thus no evidence (vv. 11-12)
  2. They can't prove it (v. 13)
- C. *Confess that I am of the Way they call a sect* (vv. 14-15)
  1. Worship according to that way (v. 14a)
  2. Believe all that is in the law and prophets (v. 14b)
  3. Have hope that there will be a resurrection (v. 15)
- D. *Have always tried to have a clear conscience* (v. 16)
- E. *Where are the witnesses* (vv. 17-20)?
  1. Reason I came from Jerusalem (v. 17)
  2. They didn't find me doing wrong (v. 18)
  3. If I have done wrong, they should be here (v. 19)
  4. Let those from the council say what I did wrong there (v. 20)
- F. *The reason I am being judged – is the resurrection* (v. 21)

**III. The Delay** (vv. 22-23)

- A. *Because of his knowledge of the Way* (v. 22a)
- B. *Deferred until Lysias would come* (vv. 22b)
- C. *Kept Paul in prison – but gave him liberty* (v. 23)

#### IV. The Sermon (vv. 24-25a)

- A. *It was requested* (v. 24a)
- B. *It concerned the faith in Christ* (v. 24b)
- C. *The content* (v. 25a)
  1. Righteousness – God’s plan for being righteous
  2. Self-Control – submission to God’s will
  3. Judgment to come – Reason one needs to be right

#### V. The Wait (vv. 25b-27)

- A. *Was afraid* (v. 25b)
- B. *Waited for convenient time* (v. 25b)
- C. *While he waited* (vv. 26-27)
  1. Hoped for a bribe (v. 26)
  2. Talked often with Paul (v. 26)
  3. Left Paul bound for two years (v. 27)

### Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter

#### Acts 24:21

Unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them,  
'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'

Paul now appears in Caesarea before Felix, who is the Governor (procurator) of Judea and was appointed by the emperor (A.D. 52-60). Paul has the opportunity to defend himself and to preach the gospel to Felix and his wife. Perhaps what we remember most about Felix is that he was looking for a convenient season (v. 25). He, along with King Agrippa (Acts 26) are notable cases of non-conversion.

### The Charge (vv. 1-9)

*The accusers* (vv. 1-4). Five days after Paul’s arrival in Caesarea the high priest along with the elders (members of the Sanhedrin council) came to present their case before Felix (v. 1). They hired an orator named Tertullus to present their case (vv. 1-2).<sup>1</sup> He started immediately with flattering Felix (vv. 2-4). He praised Felix for the peace and prosperity the nation enjoyed by his foresight (v.2).<sup>2</sup> He thanked him for what he had done for the nation and begged him to hear a few words from the Jews (vv.3-4).

*The accusations* (vv. 5-7). Four charges were leveled against Paul (vv. 5-6). (1) He is a plague (v. 5). He is a pest and a danger to the public. (2) He is a creator of dissension (v. 5). He is a

1 Tertullus was more of a spokesman skilled in the art of speaking than an attorney skilled in the law.

2 It is interesting that within two years Felix was called to Rome and removed from office. He wasn’t quite the leader Tertullus made him to be.

leader in rebellion. He is a troublemaker. (3) He is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes<sup>3</sup> (v. 5). He is a ringleader of a faction. (4) He tries to profane the temple (v. 6).<sup>4</sup>

Tertullus claimed that the Jews would have given him a fair trial, but Lysias took him by violence (vv. 6-7).<sup>5</sup>

*The evidence* (vv. 8-9). No real evidence was cited by the orator. As evidence that these charges were true he suggested that Felix examine him himself (v. 8).<sup>6</sup> Then, the Jews agreed with Tertullus (v. 9).

## The Defense (vv. 10-21)

*Glad to answer for myself* (v. 10). As in other defenses he had given (Acts 22, 23), he was glad to speak for himself.

*They cannot prove the accusations* (vv. 11-13). The accusation against Paul could not be proved because he did not do those things, therefore, no evidence (vv. 11-12). Paul made attempts to reason this fact with them. The time frame for the charges had been within the last twelve days (v. 11). Thus, it shouldn't be hard to ascertain whether the claim was true or if there were witnesses. They didn't find him inciting a crowd in the temple, synagogue or in the city (v. 12). Thus, they couldn't prove the charges against him (v. 13).

*Confess that I am of the Way they call a sect* (vv. 14-15). Paul acknowledged that he worshiped according to the Way called a sect (v. 14a).<sup>7</sup> He acknowledged all that was written in the law and the prophets (v. 14b). He had hope that there would be a resurrection (v. 15).<sup>8</sup>

*Have always tried to have a clear conscience* (v. 16). He made the same point here that he did before the council (23:1): he had always been sincere and always tried to do what he thought to be right (cf. 26:9-10).

*Where are the witnesses* (vv. 17-20)? The reason he came to Jerusalem was to bring alms to people of his own nation (v. 17).<sup>9</sup> Thus, he was not opposing the Jews or his own nation.

- 
- 3 He seems to be trying to pit Paul against the Romans. He pictures Paul as leading a faction that could spell trouble for Rome.
  - 4 The contention about Paul profaning the temple has modified. At the time of his arrest they said he had profaned the time by taking a Greek in with him (Acts 21:28). Now, Tertullus says that he *tried* to profane the temple.
  - 5 That is the exact opposite of what really happened. The Jews were beating him when Lysias rescued him (Acts 21:32-33). Often what is reported is the opposite of what really happened.
  - 6 There is a question among commentators as to whether Tertullus is talking about Felix questioning Paul or Lysias. The question is based on a textual issue. The NU text (the minority text) omits part of verse 6, all of verse 7 and part of verse 8. With those verses included, it appears that Tertullus is talking about questioning Paul.
  - 7 Luke uses the terms "the Way" to designate Christianity, the way of the Lord (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).
  - 8 Premillennialism says that there will be two resurrections (one for the righteous and one for the wicked). Paul affirms that there will be "a" (one) resurrection that includes the just and the unjust.
  - 9 This is the contribution that is discussed in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8-9, and Romans 15:25-31.

They didn't find him doing wrong (v. 18). When he went into the temple, he was purified (v. 18). He was not leading a revolt or causing a tumult (v. 18). Paul then concluded that if he had done wrong, the witnesses should be here (v. 19). Since they were not, then let those from the council that were present say what I did wrong there (v. 20).

*The reason I am being judged – is the resurrection* (v. 21). The question of a resurrection was a matter over which most of the Jews agreed. Furthermore, this was an issue that was of no real interest to Rome.

Paul took up each of the charges and gave a direct response. To the charges of (1) being a plague and (2) being a creator of dissension he showed that he quietly went about his work (vv. 12-13). To the charge of (3) being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes he responded that he was of the Way which believes in the resurrection (vv. 14-15). To the charge of (4) attempting to profane the temple he pointed out that he had gone into the temple (which was to prove that he was not against Moses) and also brought alms to the Jews (vv.17-19).<sup>10</sup>

### **The Delay (vv. 22-23)**

*Because of his knowledge of the Way* (v. 22a). Felix delayed a decision on the matter about Paul because he had a better understanding of Christianity than most. Felix was not deceived by Tertullus at all.

*Deferred until Lysias would come* (vv. 22b). Felix dismissed the proceedings saying he would make a decision when Claudias Lysias came. He didn't want to punish an innocent man or to get cross ways with the council. What Felix really wanted was a bribe (v. 26). We have no indication that Lysias ever came.

*Kept Paul in prison – but gave him liberty* (v. 23). While he waited he kept Paul in prison, but gave him liberty allowing friends to visit and provide for him. Such treatment was not unusual, but suggested he thought Paul was innocent.

Felix is not unlike a lot of people today. He knows enough to make him miserable. He knows what is right, but lacks the courage to do it!

### **The Sermon (vv. 24-25a)**

*It was requested* (v. 24a). After some time had passed, Felix, along with his wife Drusilla<sup>11</sup> called for Paul to come and speak to them. They wanted to know more about the faith. Was it genuine interest? Was he thinking of obeying? Was it mere curiosity? We can't be sure, but it seems from his talking with Paul time and again (v.26), that there was at least some interest.

*It concerned the faith in Christ* (v. 24b). They were about to hear a sermon on the gospel, the faith and what it means to believe in Christ.

<sup>10</sup> Credit given to Robert Harkrider for developing these points more thoroughly (*Acts*, 116-117).

<sup>11</sup> This was the daughter of Herod Agrippa (*Acts* 12). She was married to a king of an insignificant country. She left him and married Felix. Thus, their marriage was adulterous. They needed the sermon they are about to hear.

*The content* (v. 25a). There were three points to Paul's message:

1. **Righteousness** – God's plan for being righteous. This plan is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). It is by faith in Christ (Rom. 3:20-21). It requires submission (Rom. 10:1-3).
2. **Self-Control** – Submission to God's will. Self-control involves a suppression of one's own will and yielding to the will of God. It involves abstaining from and ceasing sin. That includes the adultery that Felix and Drusilla were in. Faith in Christ involves a dramatic change.
3. **Judgment to come** – The reason one needs to be right. Sinners must repent in view of the judgment day coming (Acts 17:30-31). All must appear before the judgment bar of God (2 Cor. 5:10).

Consider the boldness of Paul as he presented the gospel before this couple. He addressed two people who were living in adultery! He addressed one who had the power to release him or execute him. None of that mattered to Paul. He preached the truth!

### **The Wait (vv. 25b-27)**

*Was afraid* (v. 25b). Upon hearing this message Felix was afraid. He "trembled" (KJV). He was "terrified" (ASV). He saw the truth and it scared him!

*Waited for convenient time* (v. 25b). Though he was bothered by the message, he postponed any response until a convenient time. When the time was right, he would call for Paul. There is no evidence that he ever found that convenient time.

*While he waited* (vv. 26-27). While he was waiting for the convenient time, he kept hoping for a bribe from Paul (v. 26), he talked often with Paul (v. 26), and he left Paul bound for two years (v. 27).<sup>12</sup>

### **Questions**

1. Who was Felix? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was Tertullus and what role did he play? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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12 A.D. 58-60.

3. What were the accusations brought against Paul? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What evidence was presented by Tertullus of his charges? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did Paul answer each of the four charges?
  - First charge: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Second charge: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Third charge: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Fourth charge: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the reason Paul was being questioned? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Is there any indication of what Felix thought about the presentation of Tertullus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Why did Felix delay his decision about Paul? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the content of the sermon Paul presented before Felix and Drusilla? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What reaction did Felix give to the sermon? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Acts 25 & 26****Lesson 24  
Paul Before Festus and Paul Before Agrippa****Outline Chapter 25****I. Paul Before Festus** (vv. 1-12)**A. The Jews informed Festus about Paul** (vv. 1-5)

1. They asked that Paul be brought to Jerusalem so they could kill him along the way (vv. 1-3)
2. Festus said he would go to Caesarea and asked the accusers to go with him (vv. 4-5)

**B. Paul appealed to Caesar** (vv. 6-12)

1. The Jews brought many charges against Paul, but no proof (vv. 6-7)
2. Paul responded saying he had done no wrong (v. 8)
3. Festus asked if Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem to be judged (v. 9)
4. Paul asked to go before Caesar (vv. 10-12)

**II. Festus Informed King Agrippa** (vv. 13-22)**A. Festus told of Paul's appeal to Caesar** (vv. 13-21)

1. Paul was a prisoner left by Felix (v. 14)
2. When informed I waited until his accusers came (vv. 15-16)
3. The accusations were not what I thought – it was about Jesus whom Paul affirms to be alive (vv. 17-19)
4. Paul appealed to Caesar (vv. 20-21)

**B. King Agrippa said he would hear Paul himself** (v. 22)**III. Festus Presented Paul to King Agrippa** (vv. 23-27)**A. All entered the auditorium** (v. 23)**B. Festus asked king Agrippa to hear Paul so he would have something to write to Caesar** (vv. 24-27)

1. The Jews said he was not fit to live (v. 24)
2. But I (Festus) found no cause of death (v. 25a)
3. He appealed to Caesar, so I am sending him (v. 25b)
4. I had nothing to write to Caesar, so I brought him to you (vv. 26-27)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 25:25**

*But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him.*

## Outline Acts 26

### I. Paul's Defense before Agrippa (vv. 1-23)

- A. *I am happy to speak – beg you to hear* (vv. 1-3)
- B. *My life before my conversion* (vv. 4-11)
  - 1. Was raised as a Jew (v. 4)
  - 2. Was a Pharisee – the strictest sect (v. 5)
  - 3. Held to the promise made to our fathers (vv. 6-8)
    - a. This (still holding to the promise) is why I am accused (vv. 6-7)
    - b. Why should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead (v. 8)?
  - 4. I was opposed to Jesus of Nazareth and persecuted his people (vv. 9-11)
- C. *My conversion* (vv. 12-18)
  - 1. A bright light shone on me while on the road to Damascus (vv. 12-13)
  - 2. I heard a voice from heaven (vv. 14-18)
    - a. The voice asked why I was persecuting him (v. 14)
    - b. The voice identified himself as Jesus (v. 15)
    - c. Jesus called me to preach to the Gentiles (vv. 16-18)
- D. *I have been fulfilling my mission to preach to the Gentiles* (vv. 19-23)
  - 1. I preached to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles (vv. 19-20)
  - 2. This is the reason they seek to kill me (v. 21)
  - 3. By God's help I continued to preach what the prophets said about Christ (vv. 22-23)

### II. Reaction to Paul's Defense (vv. 24-32)

- A. *Festus said he was mad* (vv. 24-26)
- B. *Agrippa was almost persuaded* (vv. 27-29)
- C. *Two conclusions* (vv. 30-32)
  - 1. Done nothing worthy of death or chains (v. 31)
  - 2. Would be set free – except he appealed to Caesar (v. 32)

### Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter

#### Acts 26:31

*And when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."*

Paul is left in prison at Caesarea for two years (A.D. 58-60). Felix, the governor, is removed from office by Rome and Festus takes his place. Festus now has to make a decision about what to do with Paul. Because Paul appeals to Caesar, Festus merely becomes a transition point to Paul going before Agrippa. For that reason we will quickly move through chapter 25.

In chapter 26, Paul is giving his defense before King Agrippa. Here, as with Felix, we have another notable case of non-conversion.

## Paul Before Festus (25:1-12)

*The Jews informed Festus about Paul* (vv. 1-5). When Festus visited Jerusalem, the leaders among the Jews told him about Paul and asked that he be brought to Jerusalem so they could kill him along the way (vv. 1-3). Festus said he would go to Caesarea with the accusers to lay the charges out before him (vv. 4-5).

*Paul appealed to Caesar* (vv. 6-12). After several days Festus went to Caesarea and had Paul brought to him as he sat on the Judgment seat (v. 6). The Jews brought many charges against him, but gave no proof (vv. 6-7). Paul responded saying he had done no wrong against the Jew's law nor against Caesar (v. 8). Festus asked if Paul wanted to be judged before him in Jerusalem (v. 9).<sup>1</sup>

Paul asked to go before Caesar (vv. 10).<sup>2</sup> He told Festus that he had done no wrong. However, if he had committed some crime worthy of death, he would not fight the death penalty (v. 11).<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, if he was innocent "neither you nor anyone else has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me" (v. 11, LBP). So he appealed to Caesar. Festus said that Paul would go to Caesar (v. 12).

## Festus Informed King Agrippa (25:13-22)

*Festus told of Paul's appeal to Caesar* (vv. 13-21). After a few days King Agrippa<sup>4</sup> and his wife Bernice came to visit Festus. Festus informed the king that Paul was a prisoner left by Felix (v. 14). Festus waited until Paul's accusers came (vv.15-16). He found that the accusations were not what he had thought. Rather, it was about Jesus whom Paul affirmed to be alive (vv. 17-19). He appealed to Caesar so he is still in prison (vv. 20-21).

*King Agrippa said he would hear Paul himself* (v. 22).

## Festus Presented Paul to King Agrippa (25:23-27)

*All entered the auditorium* (v. 23). Agrippa and Bernice came in with great ceremony along with commanders and prominent men. Felix called for Paul to be brought in to him.

*Festus asked King Agrippa to hear Paul so he would have something to write Caesar* (vv. 24-27). He told the king that the Jews said he was not fit to live (v. 24). However, he found no cause of death in Paul (v. 25a). He appealed to Caesar, so he was sending him to Caesar (v. 25b). Because Festus had nothing to write to Caesar, he brought him to Agrippa (vv. 26-27).

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- 1 This told Paul of the real intent of Festus. He was wanting to show favor toward the Jews.
  - 2 It was within his legal right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar.
  - 3 Capital punishment is approved of God (Gen. 9:6; Exo. 21:12; Deut. 17:4-7; Rom. 13:4).
  - 4 This is Agrippa II, son of Agrippa I (who killed James) and great grandson of Herod the Great. He was a brother to Bernice and Drusilla. "His relation to Bernice his sister was a scandal among Jews and Gentiles alike (Ant, XX, vii, 3)" (I.S.B.E.). He ruled over Judea, and parts of Galilee and Perea (Gareth L. Reese, Acts, xviii).

## Paul's Defense before Agrippa (26:1-23)

*I am happy to speak – beg you to hear* (vv. 1-3). Paul was glad to address the accusations by the Jews before Agrippa especially since he was an expert in the customs and questions of the Jews (v. 3).<sup>5</sup> Because of that, Agrippa would understand what Paul would say and have a greater potential to be converted.

*My life before my conversion* (vv. 4-11). He first addressed his background and life before his conversion. He was raised as a Jew (v. 4). He was a Pharisee of the strictest sect (v. 5).

He was being judged because he preached the things that the Jews hoped for—the coming of the Messiah. He held to the promise made to the fathers (vv. 6-8).<sup>6</sup> In view of this hope, it should not have been thought incredible that God should raise the dead (v. 8).

Going back to his former life, he (like the Jews who opposed him) was set against Jesus of Nazareth (v. 9). He persecuted them to the point of death (v. 10). He even sought them out in foreign cities (v. 11).

*My conversion* (vv. 12-18).<sup>7</sup> Next he addressed the change in his life and what caused it. While involved in a persecution trip to Damascus, the Lord appeared to him (vv. 12-18).<sup>8</sup> He saw a bright light (brighter than the noon sun) shining around him (vv. 12-13). He heard a voice from heaven speaking in Hebrew saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads” (v. 14).<sup>9</sup> Saul asked who he was, and the voice identified himself as Jesus (v. 15).

Jesus appeared to Paul for the purpose of calling him to preach to the Gentiles (vv. 16-18). The preaching would produce a change that Paul describes in three phrases. 1. To open their eyes. Preaching enables the hearer to see what he has not seen. The listener can see clearly about God, Christ, salvation and the church. 2. To turn them from darkness to light. Darkness stands for sin, ignorance and error. Through preaching the hearer is led to an understanding and walk in the light (cf. Eph. 5:3-14). 3. To turn them from the power of Satan to God. Preaching turns men from the rule of Satan to the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13).

The change produced by the preaching brings two results (v. 18): 1. The forgiveness of sins. Their sins are removed and remembered no more (Heb. 8:12). 2. An inheritance. Once one becomes a child of God he is thus an heir of God (Rom. 8:16-18).

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5 Agrippa was given authority from Rome to appoint and remove the high priest. “Herod Agrippa II would thus be looked upon as some kind of authority in matters respecting the Jewish religion” (Reese, *ibid*, 863).

6 Genesis 12:1-3.

7 This is the third account of his conversion (cf. Acts 9, 22).

8 For evidence that Saul was not saved on the road to Damascus look at lessons 9 (Acts 9) and 21 (Acts 22).

9 “The sharp goad carried in the plowman’s hand, against which the oxen kick on being pricked. The metaphor, though not found in Jewish writings, was common in Greek and Roman writings” (M. R. Vincent, *Vincent’s Word Studies of the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

*I have been fulfilling my mission to preach to the Gentiles* (vv. 19-23). Paul pointed out to Agrippa that what has called him into question is his fulfillment of his mission of preaching to the Gentiles. He preached “that they should repent, turn to God<sup>10</sup> and do works befitting repentance”<sup>11</sup> (v. 20). This was the reason they sought to kill him (v. 21). It was his preaching about the resurrection and salvation offered to the Gentiles that was the problem – not anything that they found him doing wrong. Yet, by God’s help he continued to preach what the prophets said about Christ (vv. 22-23).

### Reaction to Paul’s Defense (26:24-32)

*Festus said he was mad* (vv. 24-26). Festus charged that Paul’s learning had made him crazy.<sup>12</sup> Paul responded by saying he was not crazy, but spoke words that were true and reasonable (v. 25). He stated that the king knew this for none of this was done in a corner (v. 26). The life of Christ, his crucifixion and resurrection were well known and discussed by believers and enemies alike.

*Agrippa was almost persuaded* (vv. 27-29). Paul turned to Agrippa and asked if he believed the prophets, then stated he knew he believed (v. 27). Agrippa replied, “You almost persuade<sup>13</sup> me to become a Christian”<sup>14</sup> (v. 28). Paul responded by saying he wished that he was not just almost but altogether as he was, except for being in chains (v. 29).

*Two conclusions* (vv. 30-32). The king stood up (ending the hearing), went aside and conferred with Bernice and Festus. They drew two conclusions: 1. Paul had done nothing worthy of death or chains (v. 31). 2. He would have been set free, but he appealed to Caesar (v. 32).

### Questions

1. Describe Festus’ attitude toward Paul and toward the Jews. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did Paul ask to go before Caesar? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10 This is a reference to baptism. Consider parallel passages: Acts 2:38 (repent and be baptized); Acts 3:19 (repent and be converted); and here in Acts 26:20 (repent and turn to God). Baptism is the point at which one is converted and turns to God.

11 Repentance involves a change of life (cf. Rom. 6). Goodspeed translation says, “live as men who have repented should.” The NIV renders this, “prove their repentance by their deeds.”

12 The NIV translates this “Your great learning is driving you insane.”

13 There is a question as to whether Agrippa was saying he was almost persuaded (see KJV, NKJV, and ASV) or was he ridiculing the idea that in such a short time he could persuade him to become a Christian. The fact that Paul said he knew that Agrippa believed (v. 27) would seem to point to his interest. Paul followed Agrippa’s comments with an urge to be fully persuaded (v. 29).

14 The term Christian is used three times (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16).

3. What do we know about King Agrippa? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do we know about Bernice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the dilemma that Festus faced that caused him to bring Paul's case before King Agrippa? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What made Agrippa an expert in the Jews' religion? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Preaching is designed to create what changes? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What reaction did Festus have to Paul's defense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What reaction did Agrippa have to Paul's defense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What conclusions did Agrippa, Bernice and Festus draw? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 27****Lesson 25  
Voyage to Rome—Shipwreck at Sea****Outline****I. From Caesarea to Fair Havens (vv. 1-12)**

- A. *The way of travel (vv. 1-8)*
  - 1. From Caesarea to Sidon (vv. 1-3)
  - 2. Sailed over Cyprus to Myra (vv. 4-6)
  - 3. Sailed to Cnidus, under Crete to Fair Havens (vv.7-8)
- B. *Paul warned against continuing the voyage (vv. 9-12)*
  - 1. Paul warned of losing the ship, cargo and lives (vv. 9-10)
  - 2. They kept sailing (vv. 11-12)
    - a. The helmsman and the owner wanted to keep sailing (v. 11)
    - b. The harbor was not suitable to stay in winter (v. 12)

**II. From Fair Havens to Malta (vv. 13-44)**

- A. *A storm at Sea (vv. 13-38)*
  - 1. A strong wind and darkness scared all on board (vv. 13-20)
  - 2. Paul warned that all must stay aboard ship (vv. 21-26)
  - 3. As they sailed close to land, they put anchors down and waited for day (vv. 27-38)
- B. *Shipwreck - yet all are saved (vv. 39-44)*
  - 1. The ship ran aground and got stuck (vv. 39-41a)
  - 2. The ship broke into pieces (v. 41b)
  - 3. All escaped to land (vv. 42-44)

**Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter****Acts 27:41**

*But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground;  
and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable,  
but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.*

Paul has appealed to Caesar, so he is being sent to Rome. In this chapter and the next, Paul is traveling from Caesarea, where he has been in prison for 2 years, to Rome where the book of Acts leaves him in prison.

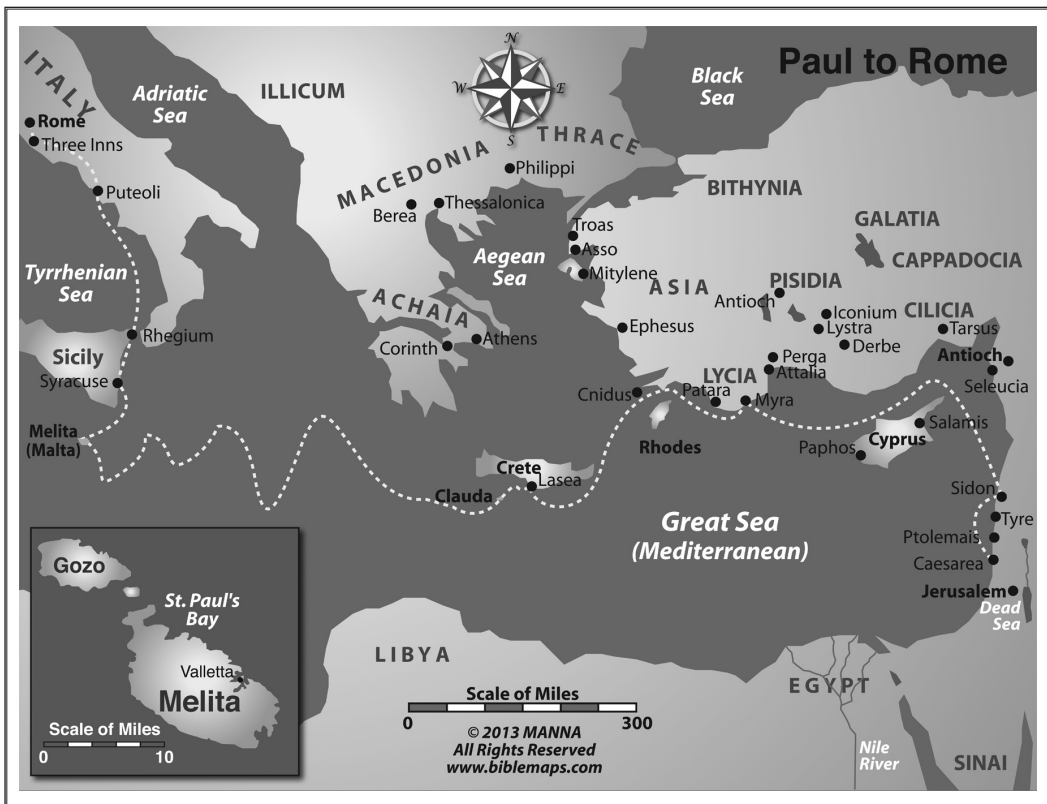
“This account of Paul’s voyage to Rome is like no other story in all the Bible. In it the reader’s attention is directed, not to spiritual truths and acts of devotion, but rather to such mundane things like ships and seas, winds and waves, islands, towns, and harbors. Altogether Luke has given a description of first century ships and seamanship surpassing anything else in extant Greek and Roman literature. A fascinating story of adventure, it stands also as a descriptive masterpiece.”<sup>1</sup>

This is a story of a servant of God in the midst of an extreme emergency. His faith remains strong. He does not cave under pressure.

## From Caesarea to Fair Havens (vv. 1-12)

*The way of travel* (vv. 1-8). Paul was put into the hands of Julius, a centurion, along with other prisoners (v. 1). They boarded a ship headed to Adramyttium, a seaport city in Mysia that opened toward the island of Lesbos. The intent was to travel along the coasts of Asia. Obviously, it didn’t turn out that way.

Notice the use of “we” starting at verse 2. Luke was with Paul on this trip.<sup>2</sup> Aristarchus from Thessalonica was also a companion on the trip.<sup>3</sup>



1 Garth L. Reese, *Acts*, 890.

2 See Acts 16:9-16; 20:5- 21:17.

3 He was one of two taken into the Theater at Ephesus (Acts 19:29). He was with Paul on his third journey (Acts 20:4). See also Col. 4:10; Philemon 23.



The first leg of the journey took them from Caesarea to Sidon. Julius gave Paul liberty to go to his friends who helped provide his needs (v. 3).

They sailed from Sidon going north of Cyprus using the island to block the strong west wind. Sailing off the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia they docked at Myra in Lycia (v. 5). At Myra they found a ship of Alexandria headed toward Italy and got on board (v. 6). From Myra they sailed slowly for many days and had troubles, but finally made it to Gnidos (v. 7). The strong winds would not allow them to follow the coasts of Asia, so they sailed around the east end of Crete (where Salmone is) and went to the south side of Crete to Fair Havens which was near Lasea where they stayed awhile (v. 8).

*Paul warned against continuing the voyage* (vv. 9-12). Continuing to sail would be dangerous since the Fast<sup>4</sup> was already past (v. 9). Paul warned that sailing on would likely end in loss of the ship, cargo and even the lives of those on board (v. 10). However, the centurion listened more to the helmsman and the owner of the ship than he did to Paul (v. 11). Since Fair Havens was not suitable to stay the winter, they set sail hoping to make it to Phoenix<sup>5</sup> and spend the winter there.

### **From Fair Havens to Malta (vv. 13-44)**

*A storm at Sea* (vv. 13-38). Leaving Fair Havens, they had a soft south wind and things looked good (v. 13). However, a tempestuous<sup>6</sup> head wind called Euroclydon (northeaster, RSV) arose and drove them off course (vv. 14-15). So they sailed around the eastern and southern sides of the island Clauda (less than 30 miles south of Crete). The life boat had to be brought on board, which was difficult to do in the storm (v. 16). The shipmen had to use cables to undergird the ship to keep it together.

They were fearful of running aground on the Syrtis Sands<sup>7</sup> so they struck sail<sup>8</sup> and the ship was driven by the wind and waves (v. 17). As they were violently battered by the storm, they threw the ships tackle overboard (v. 19). The darkness of the storm did not allow them to see the sun or stars for many days (14 days, v. 33). All hope to come out of the storm alive was fading (v. 20).

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4 The Day of Atonement which fell late September or early October.

5 This was west of Fair Havens on the southern part of Crete. Much discussion among commentators is given to "opening toward the southwest and northwest". "According to the English Revised Version, kata (NT:2596) means 'down:' 'looking down the southwest and northwest winds,' i.e., in the direction toward which they blow, namely, northeast and southeast. This latter view assumes that Phenice and Lutro are the same, which is uncertain" (M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft).

6 The NIV translates this "a wind of hurricane force."

7 The quicksands on the northern shore of Africa.

8 "...lowered or took down the mast, or the yards to which the sails were attached. There has been a great variety of interpretations proposed on this passage. The most probable is that they took down the mast, by cutting or otherwise, as is now done in storms at sea, to save the ship. They were at the mercy of the wind and waves, and their only hope was by taking away their sails" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft).

Paul warned that all must stay aboard ship (vv. 21-26). He told them that they should have listened to him and not left Crete. Had they listened they wouldn't be in the midst of the disaster they were facing (v. 21). However, he urged them to be encouraged because no one would lose their life; only the ship would be lost (v. 22). He knew this because an angel (of the God to whom Paul belonged and whom he served)<sup>9</sup> appeared and told him not to be afraid for he would stand before Caesar (v. 24).<sup>10</sup> So, God assured him that he and all those on board with him would survive the storm. However, the ship would run aground on an island (v. 26).

Paul's response was "I believe God that it will be just as it was told me" (v. 25). What a statement of total trust, reliance and confidence in God. Paul chose to believe the words of God even when the circumstances around him were dismal, Paul chose to believe the words of God. We will face many circumstances in life wherein human wisdom will point in a different direction than the word of God. If we belong to God and serve God we will choose to believe God!

After two weeks of being driven and tossed around in the Adriatic Sea, the sailors thought they were getting close to land<sup>11</sup> and decided to take sounding<sup>12</sup> to see how close they were (vv. 27-28). The first sounding measured 20 fathoms (120 feet).<sup>13</sup> They went a little further and took another sounding which measured 15 fathoms (90 feet). Thinking that they could run aground, they dropped four anchors and wished for the daylight to come (v. 29). Meanwhile, some of the sailors were seeking to escape by letting down the life boat, saying they were putting out anchors (v. 30). Seeing this, Paul told the centurion and the soldiers that if these men didn't stay on board they would not be saved. So the soldiers cut the ropes to the life boat and let it fall (vv. 31-32).<sup>14</sup> As it drew near to daybreak, Paul urged all to take food for they had not eaten in 2 weeks (v. 33).<sup>15</sup> He stated that they needed to eat to have strength for what they were about to face (v. 34). The total of those on board was 276 people (v. 37). They all ate. When they were full, they threw the wheat into the sea to lighten the ship.

*Shipwreck - yet all are saved* (vv. 39-44). When the sun rose, they saw land they didn't recognize, but saw a bay with a beach. So, they planned to run the ship into the bay (v. 39). The anchors were left in the sea. The main sail was hoisted and they headed for shore (v. 40).

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9 This is a description of total devotion and commitment to God. Paul did not serve a god that belonged to him. He belonged to God (Rom. 12:1). His god does not serve him, rather he serves his God (Gal. 2:20).

10 Paul had already been told this (Acts 23:11). There are times we need to be reminded of what we've been told and already know.

11 How could they sense they were close to land when it was in the darkness of the storm as well as at midnight? Perhaps they could hear the breakers crashing against the shore (F. F. Bruce, *Book of Acts*, 490).

12 This is done by dropping a line with a weight to measure how deep the water is.

13 A fathom is 6 feet.

14 By this point Paul has gained the attention of at least Julius, the centurion, and his soldiers.

15 "No regular meal. It cannot mean that they had lived entirely without food, but that they had been in so much danger, were so constantly engaged, and had been so anxious about their safety, that they had taken no regular meal, or that what they had taken had been at irregular intervals, and had been a scanty allowance" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

The ship struck a sandbar where two seas met while they were still some distance from shore (v. 41).<sup>16</sup> The prow (front) of the ship stuck fast in the sand, while the stern (back) of the ship was broken into pieces by the violent waves (v. 41). The soldiers were going to kill all the prisoners lest they escape. However, Julius, wanting to save Paul stopped them from doing so. So the centurion commanded those who could swim to jump overboard and swim to shore. Those who couldn't swim hung on to boards and pieces of the wreckage to make it to shore. The chapter ended by saying that they all made it safely to shore just as God had told Paul.

## Questions

1. Who is with Paul on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. How was Paul treated by Julius? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. What time of the year did Paul's voyage take place? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was Paul's warning at Fair Havens? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did they leave Fair Havens? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. What measures were taken to prevent disaster at sea? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Luke and the rest of the passengers think would happen at sea? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>16</sup> A sandbar which is washed up on both sides by the two seas.

8. How long did the storm last? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What did Paul tell those on board with him and how did he know what he told them? \_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Think of some practical applications of Paul's statement, "I believe God" (v. 25). List some circumstances in life wherein human wisdom will point in a different direction than the word of God. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 28****Lesson 26  
Arrival and Work in Rome****Outline****I. On the Island of Malta** (vv. 1-10)

- A. *Paul was treated well on the island* (vv. 1-2, 7, 10)
- B. *A viper bit Paul* (vv. 3-6)
  1. The people first thought that he was a murderer (vv.3-4)
  2. Paul was not harmed (v. 5)
  3. The people then concluded that he was a god (v. 6)
- C. *Paul healed some* (vv. 7-9)
  1. Healed the father of Publius (vv. 7-8)
  2. Healed others who had diseases (v. 9)

**II. Arrival in Rome** (vv. 11-16)

- A. *Sailed to Syracuse and stayed three days* (vv. 11-12)
- B. *Sailed on to Puteoli and stayed seven days* (vv. 13-14)
- C. *Brethren from Rome met them in Appii Forum and Three Inns* (v. 15)
- D. *Came to Rome* (v. 16)

**III. Preaching in Rome** (vv. 17-31)

- A. *Paul talked to the leaders of the Jews* (vv. 17-22)
  1. Informed them why he was a prisoner and going before Caesar (vv. 17-20)
  2. The Jews stated what they had heard (vv. 21-22)
    - a. Nothing evil against Paul (v. 21)
    - b. But they knew that the "sect" was evil spoken of (v. 22)
    - c. Desired to hear more (v. 22)
- B. *Preached to the Jews about Christ* (vv. 23-29)
  1. Paul preached about Jesus from the Law and Prophets (v. 23)
  2. Reaction (vv. 24-28)
    - a. Some believed (v. 24a)
    - b. Some disbelieved (v. 24b)
    - c. They departed when Paul spoke of the hardening of the Jew's hearts and turned to the Gentiles (vv. 25-29)
    - d. Disputed among themselves (vv. 25, 28)
- C. *Continued preaching for two years* (vv. 30-31)
  1. In his own rented house (v. 30)
  2. Allowed visitors (v. 30)
  3. Preached and taught (v. 31)

## Key Verses that Summarize the Chapter

### Acts 28:30-31

*30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him,  
31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.*

Chapter 27 closes with all 276 people aboard the ship either swimming or floating on pieces of the wreckage to the shore. They are not sure where they are at first. This chapter opens with them learning that this is the island of Malta (v. 1).<sup>1</sup>

As the chapter ends, Paul is in prison in Rome (vv. 30-31). Paul has planned for some time to go to Rome. While on his third journey he writes to the church at Rome saying he plans to visit them (Rom. 1:10-15; 15:22-24). He plans to go after he visits Jerusalem (Acts 19:21). Well, he goes to Rome! And, it is after he went to Jerusalem. But, it is not as he planned.

After Paul's arrest, God has promised him that he would appear before Caesar (Acts 23:1). God fulfilled his promise. He makes it to Rome at last. It took years and some unexpected twists and turns, but through God's providence he was led to Rome.<sup>2</sup>

### On the Island of Malta (vv. 1-10)

*Paul was treated well on the island* (vv. 1-2, 7, 10). The natives<sup>3</sup> showed unusual ("extraordinary" NASV) kindness<sup>4</sup> toward all who came ashore. They built a large fire because of the rain and cold, making all feel welcome (v. 2). A second occasion of kindness was shown at the estate of Publius who showed hospitality toward Paul and his companions for three days (v. 7). A third occasion of kindness was at the end of the three months stay as they sent Paul and his travelers off to Rome (v. 10). They honored them in many ways showing their love and appreciation. Then, they provided them with necessities for travel.

*A viper bit Paul* (vv. 3-6). While gathering sticks for the fire, a poisonous snake came out of the bundle and fastened on Paul's hand (v. 3).<sup>5</sup> The people at first concluded that he was a murderer and this was the gods' way of executing justice though he escaped from the

1 Malta (or Melita) was a small island approximately 8 miles wide by 15 miles long.

2 "Paul's life is a reminder that God is good, He watches and provides for His people, though at the time our faith may be tested when it seems that He is not near" (Mark Copeland, [http://executableoutlines.com/acts\\_so/ac28\\_1.htm](http://executableoutlines.com/acts_so/ac28_1.htm)).

3 Barbarians, not as we use the term, but those who did not speak Greek. Thus, foreigners.

4 The word for kindness means "love of mankind, occurs in the New Testament only here and Titus 3:4 (adverb in Acts 27:3)" (A. T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

5 Perhaps the Lord caused the viper to hang onto Paul long enough so all around could see that he indeed was bitten. Thus, it couldn't be argued that it must have just looked like he was struck, but was not.

sea (vv. 3-4). After time had passed that he should have died or at least swollen, they were amazed that no harm came (v. 5).<sup>6</sup> They then concluded that he was a god (v. 6).<sup>7</sup>

*Paul healed some* (vv. 7-9). While staying at the estate of Publius, the father of Publius became sick with a fever<sup>8</sup> and dysentery (v. 8).<sup>9</sup> Paul healed him. As the word of that miracle spread across the island, others who had diseases came to be healed (v. 9).

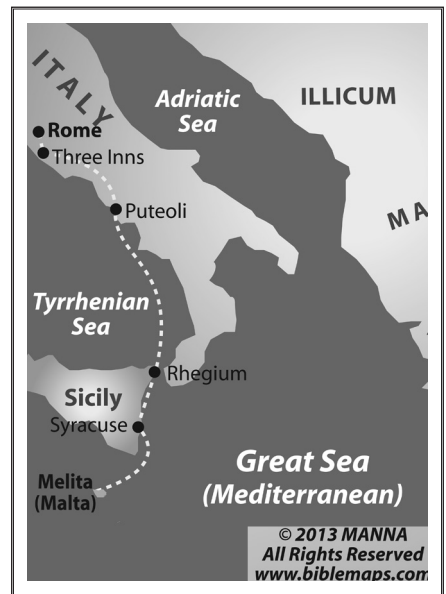
## Arrival in Rome (vv. 11-16)

*Sailed to Syracuse and stayed three days* (vv. 11-12). After the winter had passed, they boarded a ship from Alexandria (Egypt) that had spent the winter at Malta (v. 11). The ship's figurehead (sign) was the twin brothers (Castor and Pollux, sons of Zeus).<sup>10</sup> From Malta they sailed to Syracuse on the island of Sicily and stayed there 3 days (v. 12).

*Sailed on to Puteoli and stayed seven days* (vv. 13-14). From Syracuse they sailed to Rhegium (on the "toe" of the boot of Italy). The next day they sailed to Puteoli.<sup>11</sup> Here, the sailing ended and land travel began. They found brethren there who invited them (Paul, Luke and Aristarchus) to stay with them seven days (v. 14).<sup>12</sup> Then they headed toward Rome.

*Brethren from Rome met them in Appii Forum and Three Inns* (v. 15). When word got to Rome about Paul being in Italy, brethren from the church at Rome travelled 33 miles to Three Inns and some went 10 miles further to Appii Forum to meet Paul. They were not ashamed to be identified with Paul the prisoner. Paul was so encouraged by these brethren that he thanked God for them.

*Came to Rome* (v. 16). Finally, Paul and his companions reached Rome.<sup>13</sup> The centurion (Julius) delivered Paul and the other prisoners to the captain of the guard. Paul was given special treatment which allowed him to dwell by himself with a guard. He was now waiting in prison for his trial before Caesar.



6 This, as with other miracles, confirmed the message preached (cf. Mark 16:17-20).

7 The people, though kind, were fickle. They go from one extreme (thinking he is a murderer) to the other extreme (thinking he is a god). This isn't the first time this has happened to Paul (Acts 14:11-19).

8 The NASV renders this "recurrent fever".

9 Dysentery is a disease of the lower intestine. Perhaps it was "Malta Fever" that was caused by a micro-organism found in the milk of the Maltese goats.

10 "This means that the ship carried a symbol of these gods, probably as the figurehead on its prow...who were patron gods of seaman" (Johnny Stringer, Truth Commentaries, Acts, 570).

11 200 miles or less north of Rhegium.

12 Seven days would give Paul and his companions an opportunity to worship on the Lord's Day with these brethren.

13 This is the last use Luke makes of "we" in the book. Paul is taken to prison, but Luke is not.

## Preaching in Rome (vv. 17-31)

*Paul talked to the leaders of the Jews* (vv. 17-22). Three days after he arrived in Rome, Paul called the Jewish leaders together. There were two meetings with the Jews. The first was with these leaders. Paul informed them why he was a prisoner going before Caesar (vv. 17-20). He told them that he had done nothing against the Jews or the customs of the Jews (v. 17). Yet, he was taken prisoner in Jerusalem and placed in the hands of the Romans, who would have released him (since there was no cause for death), but he appealed to Caesar (vv. 18-19). He was forced to appeal to Caesar since the Jews opposed his release (v. 19). He did not plan to go before Caesar to accuse the Jewish nation of wrongdoing. The real reason he was a prisoner was the belief all Jews hoped for—the coming of the Messiah (v. 20). (v. 20).

The reaction to Paul's first meeting was the Jewish report saying they had not heard any reports of evil by Paul (v. 21). However, they had heard about the "sect" with which he was identified and knew that it was spoken of as evil (v. 22). They wanted to hear more about that from Paul (v. 22).

*Preached to the Jews about Christ* (vv. 23-29). Their desire for more led to a second meeting. The Jews came to where Paul was staying and listened to him explain about the Christ from the Law of Moses and the Prophets (v. 23). Ample evidence was given to these Jews that Jesus was the fulfillment of those prophecies. Jesus was the "hope of Israel" (v. 20). This was a thorough study from morning till evening (v. 23).

The reaction at this meeting was mixed (vv. 24-28). Some believed (v. 24a). Here we have another progress report. Some disbelieved (v. 24b). They left after Paul applied Isaiah 6:9-10 to them (vv. 25-27). The point of the passage in Isaiah was that his hearers would turn a deaf ear and become hardened in sin. Jesus applied that passage to the Pharisees (Matt. 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40). Here Paul applied it to these Jews in Rome who rejected the gospel. He then added that the salvation of God had been sent to the Gentiles and they would hear it! (v. 28). With that, they left and disputed among themselves (v. 29).

*Continued preaching for two years* (vv. 30-31). Paul was given freedom while he was in prison. He dwelt by himself with only a guard with him (v. 16). He had his own rented house (v. 30). Visitors were allowed to see Paul (v. 30). Among the visitors who came to Paul were Timothy (Philem. 1; Col. 1:1; Phil. 1:1), Epaphras (Col. 1:3-8; 4:12-13; Philem. 23), Onesimus (Philem. 10-12), Tychicus (Col. 4:7-9), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30; 4:18), John Mark (Col. 4:10), Aristarchus (Col. 4:10), Demas (Col. 4:14), Luke (Philem. 24), and Justus (Col. 4:11).

Paul continued to preach and teach the gospel with boldness in spite of his chains (v. 31; cf. Col. 1:23-29). It was during this time that he converted Onesimus (Philem. 10). He was able to take the gospel to the Palace guard (Phil. 1:12-20). He even had some success with Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22).

During this imprisonment Paul wrote his prison epistles (Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, and Philemon).<sup>14</sup> The book of Acts closes with Paul still in prison waiting to go before Caesar.

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14 Some suggests Hebrews should be added to the list.



## What Happened to Paul?

Did he go before Caesar? There is no record in the text of it. However, God said he would go before Caesar (Acts 27:24). Like Paul's reaction (Acts 27:25), I believe God. He must have gone before Caesar. During this imprisonment, Paul planned on being released. He was not expecting to stay in prison or be killed (Phil. 1:23-27; 2:24; Philem. 22). He was released. After his release he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. He was imprisoned a second time (66-67 A.D.) during which he wrote 2 Timothy. This time he was not expecting to be released (2 Tim. 4:6-7).

From Paul's trials and imprisonment came good, and he knew that (Phil. 1:12-14). What a fascinating book showing how the gospel was spread!

### Questions

1. What were the three acts or occasions of kindness shown to Paul and fellow travelers by the natives of Malta? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the significance of the viper being fastened to or hanging on Paul's hand? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. List the miracles found in this chapter. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What happened on the island of Malta to suggest some of the people were fickle? What other occasion did something similar happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What special treatment did Paul receive while in prison and why did he receive such treatment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Paul say to the Jewish leaders when he called them to come to him at Rome? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What did the Jewish leaders say they had heard about Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Why did the Jews leave the study Paul was having with them? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How effective was Paul's preaching while in prison for two years? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What epistles did Paul write while in prison in Rome? \_\_\_\_\_

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